

REALIZATION

ERNEST WELTMER



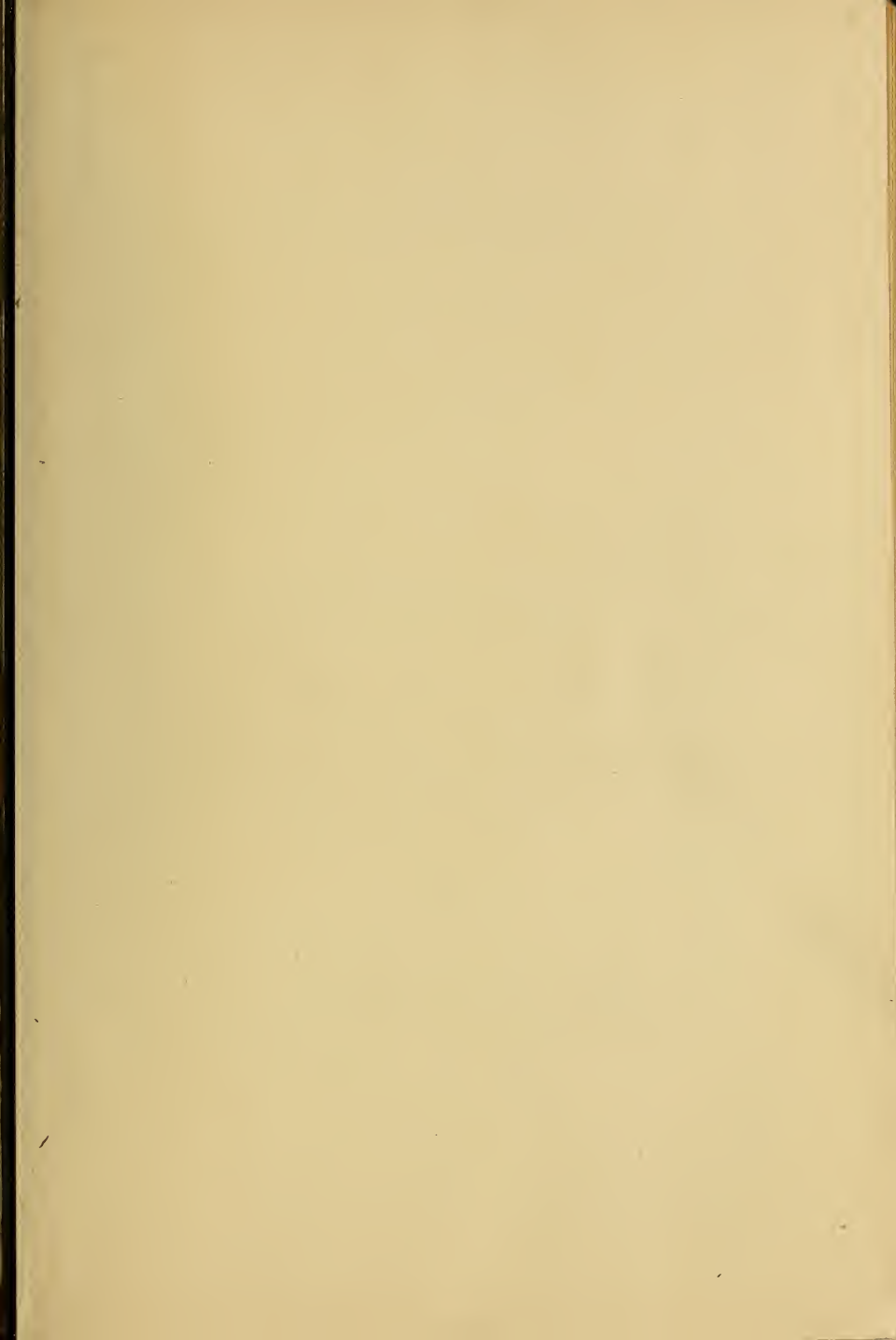


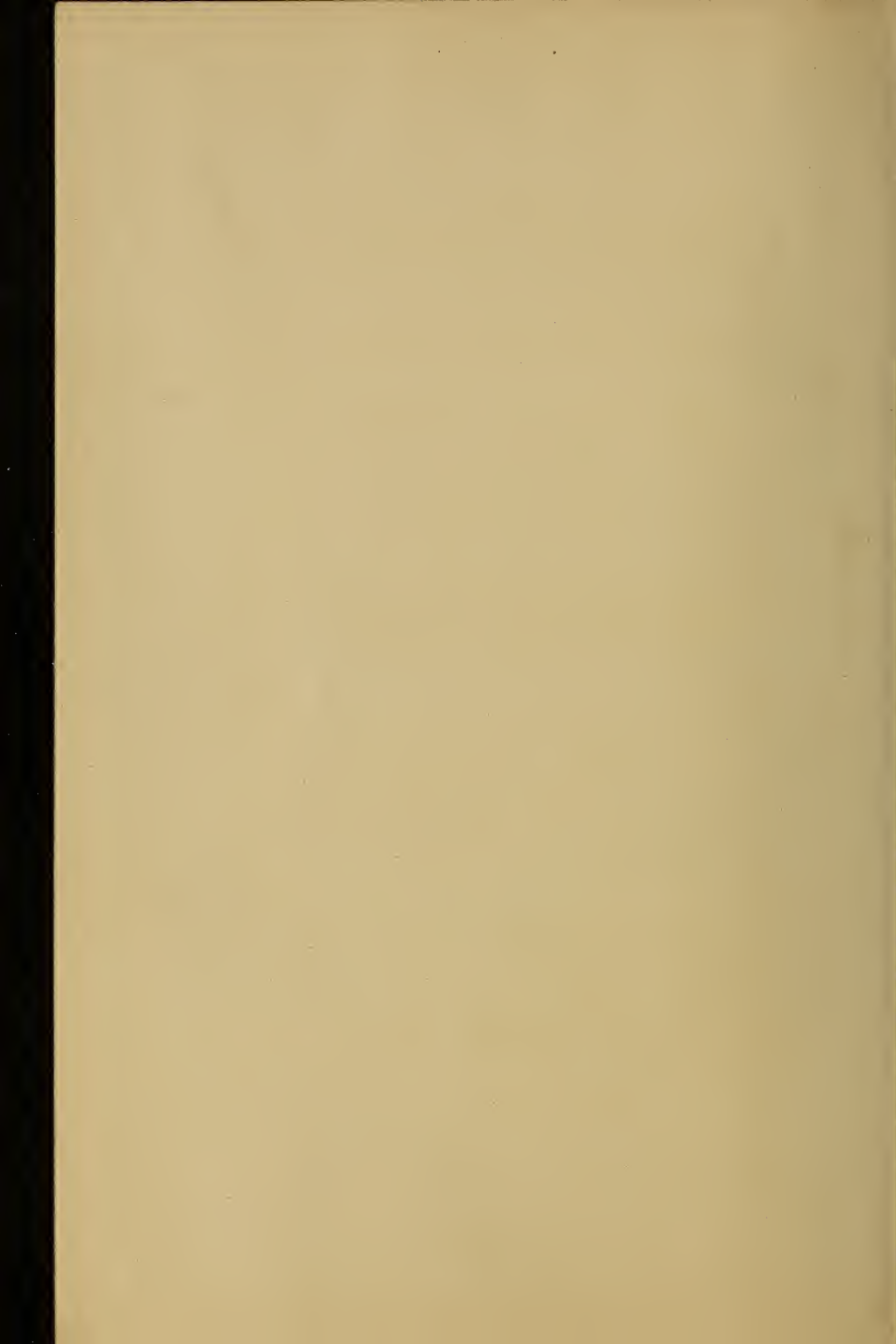
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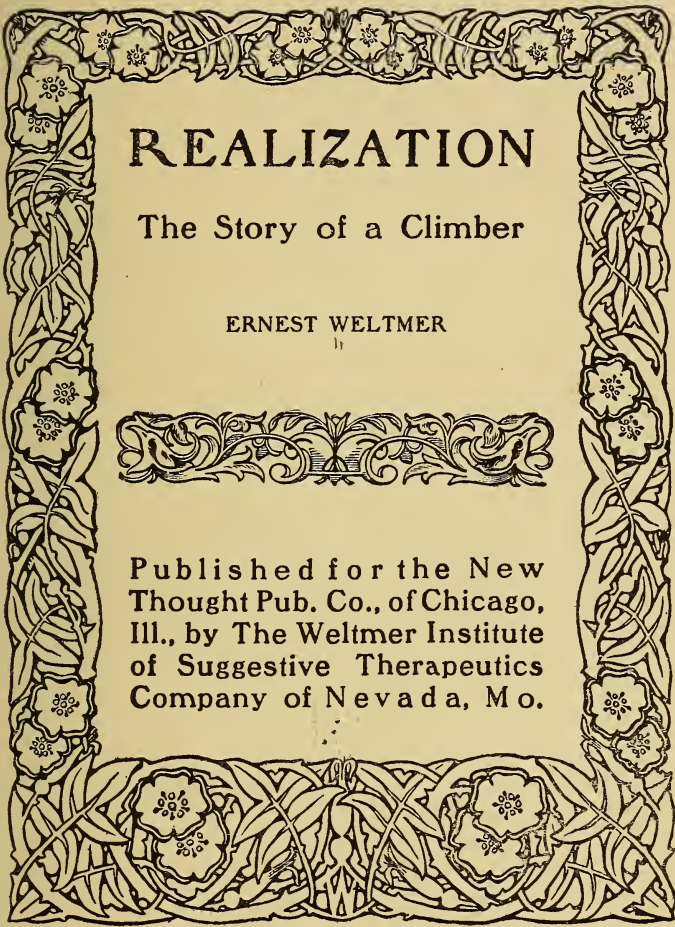
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REALIZATION

The Story of a Climber

ERNEST WELTMER



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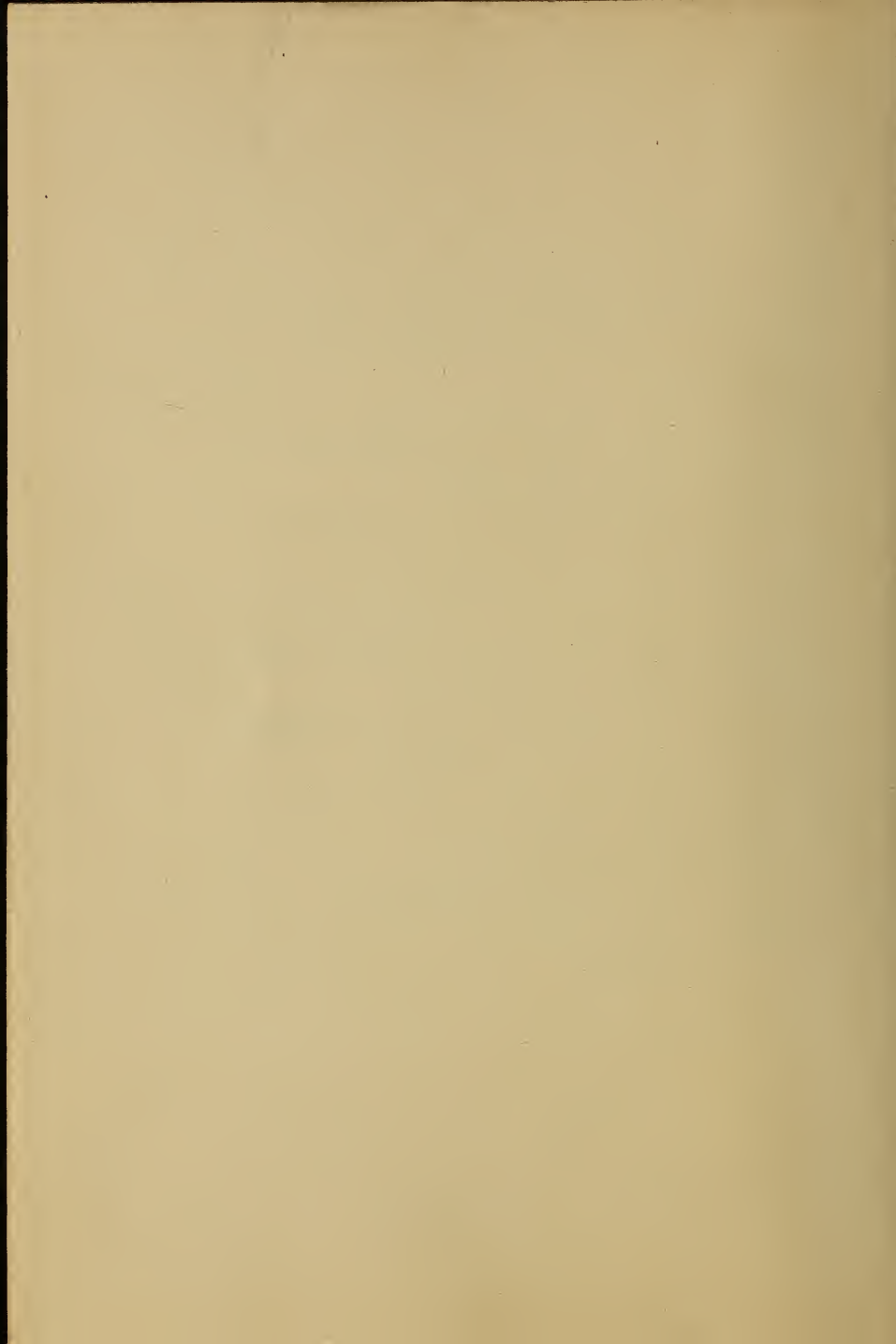
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. THE DISCOVERY.
- II. THE FINDING OF THE MESSAGE.
- III. A MOTHER'S PART.
- IV. THE BEGINNING OF THE SEARCH.
- V. THE VALUE OF FAITH.
- VI. THE TEST OF FAITH.
- VII. THE AWAKENING OF THE DOCTOR.
- VIII. JESUS, THE HEALER.
- IX. THE MASTER PHYSICIAN'S RECORD.
- X. JESUS' POWER ETERNAL.
- XI. THE DECISION.
- XII. THE DAWN OF FAITH.
- XIII. THE PROMISE FULFILLED.
- XIV. CONCLUSION.
- L'ENVOI.



DEDICATION:

To my friend, E. T. M., the chief source of my inspiration and my faithful assistant in its conception and preparation, I lovingly dedicate this little book, with the hope that it may bring to some of those who read it the realization of power, and the peace of mind that comes of the trust in themselves, which she so strongly inspires in all who come under her influence.

ERNEST WELTMER.

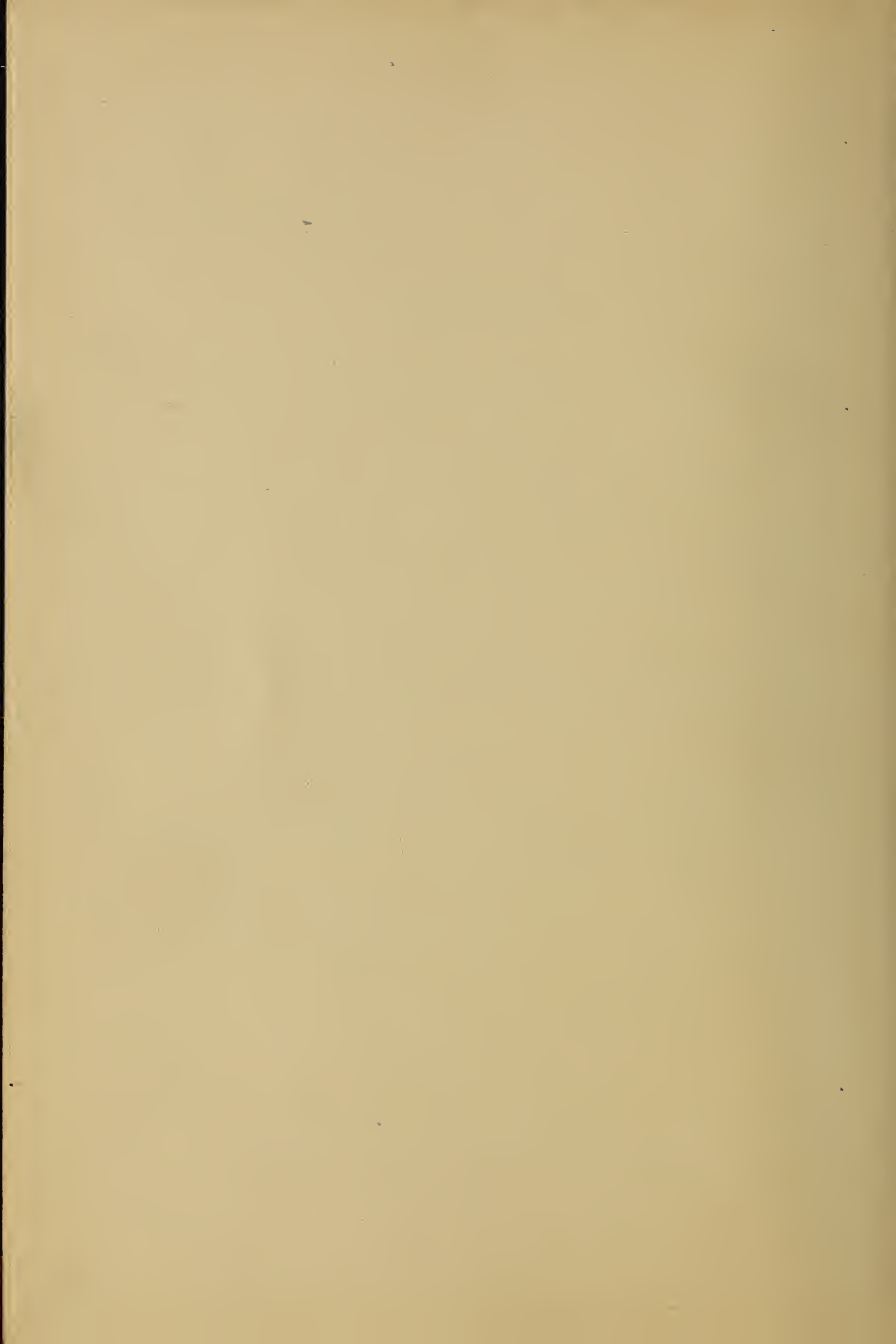


FOREWORD.

THIS is but a simple tale, telling how one man tested Jesus' teachings and found them reliable. Its essential structure is an account from real life, dealing with a period in the life of our hero, between the time when the physicians discovered for him that he was sick unto death, with nothing in *materia medica* or the doctor's skill to offer him hope of recovery; and the time when he became again a happy man with a new and glorious purpose in life, the purpose of bringing to others the hope and health that he had found for himself.

It departs from the plain truth only for the sake of literary grace and the few changes made in the story for this reason do not in the least modify its truth; the facts remain essentially as set forth.

THE AUTHOR.



CHAPTER I.

THE DISCOVERY.

A Calamity Recognized is Twice a Calamity.

LIFE WAS VERY SWEET to Stanly Weldon that morning, as he rode townwards on the old roan mare, to recite the lessons he had studied over night and to learn what more he could during the intervals between the professional calls upon the time of his teacher, who was a country doctor with a big practice.

Seemingly, he had every reason to be happy that morning. Hope was beating high in his breast, the morning was bright and warm and the larks on the fence posts, the sparrows in the grass and the mockers rocketting high above their nest trees were singing in perfect tune with the song in his heart. He had seen the day's birth as he had helped to do the chores around the farmyard; he had studied his books some more as he ate his breakfast by the lamplight in the kitchen, where the white dawn was just outlining the windows; he had done his work and had done it well; had pleased his mother with his studying and his father and brother by helping them at their early tasks; his sister had beamed with anticipatory pride upon him

whom she thought was to be a great man some day from studying those big yellow books that claimed so much of his attention; and now, with the feeling of satisfaction that always comes from doing honest work and the consciousness of the approval of all his little world, in the midst of an environment where happiness seemed the keynote of the lives that all things lived, he could not be otherwise than happy. And his happiness overflowed his heart in a rising flood that curved his lips, lighted his eyes as they fell upon the scenes around him, made his nerves tingle and almost turned itself into pain through making him feel himself and his present world too small for the full expression of his joy.

The farmers he met going to their work in distant fields or perhaps to help a neighbor, all friends of his, looked after him and felt a sympathetic thrill of pleasure in the slim, earnest-faced lad who rode into town so early with a book under his arm. They knew that he was studying medicine. Many times before they had seen him going to town on these early morning trips, always with the big book and the hopeful face that seemed to see something bright in a future hidden from their eyes. Most of them had some time heard him attack an opponent's logic, or defend his own

position against their attacks in country debates and they knew the keenness of his mind, the earnestness of his interest in anything he undertook, and while they were for the most part, men who had not many interests beyond the borders of their farms, they still had enough memories from their own dead youth to guess in some degree the dreams that were behind the light in the student's brown eyes, to sympathize with his hopes. And they had confidence in him that he would realize his dreams when the time had come.

It was still early morning when he crossed the Willow Fork, and Doll's splashing in the waters of the ford brought him back from his dreams and the future, to the present and the lesson he was soon to recite. He opened the book and, resting it on the saddle-horn, began studying over again the pages he already knew so well.

When he had read the lesson through he closed the book and took up the reins, and then in the reaction from his former exaltation, he found that he was weary and his face felt flushed, his knees ached a bit and his muscles were weak and tired. He took off his hat and let the cool morning air blow on his hot forehead, which revived his spirits somewhat. Then calling on his rather meager stock of medical information for a diag-

nosis of his condition, he decided that there was nothing wrong except that he had studied too late the night before, had arisen too early that morning and was tired from doing his chores and his seven-mile ride.

Then he forgot all about himself again in his dreams of what the future was to bring him or, rather, of what he was going to carve out of the future for himself.

So, he came to the hitching rack by the depot. There he hitched old Doll and then went up to the office of his teacher, the principal doctor in the little town. The doctor was busy and the boy had time to again go over his lessons before the teacher was ready for his pupil. But he was tired now and did not take so much interest in them as he had a short time before. He felt that he would rather lie down and sleep. He was in the reaction from his former period of exaltation, but did not think of that then; he only knew that he was tired, and hot, and limp.

When the doctor had finished his task they took up the lesson and the boy's interest was soon revived. His teacher was as much comrade as instructor. In spite of the difference in their ages, the doctor recognized an equal in his young friend and treated him as such. The boy had been used to meeting men of all ages on the debating platform; he had always been compan-

ioned more by his mother and father and by men of mature years than by boys and girls of his own age; so it did not seem strange to him to meet his preceptor on the common ground of their mutual interest, as an equal and co-worker. In their lessons they studied them together more than had them recited as pupil to master, and this always brought out the liveliest interest of the pupil, because it led him to the active use of his mind rather than to the forced use of his memory.

He soon forgot his former mood in his interest in the lesson, and was again wide awake and intensely alive with the enthusiasm of youth and the student. The doctor noticed after awhile that his companion's face was unusually flushed and that there was an unnatural fire in his eyes, but he laid these appearances to his excitement and thought nothing more of it at the time.

Before the lesson was finished another patient came in and the doctor had to leave to attend to the newcomer's needs. Left alone, Stanly soon grew listless and weary again, and when the other returned he was lying on a couch in one corner of the room.

The older man then noticed with more thought for its meaning, the flushed face and weary air and he suddenly realized that these appearances had become common of late, that they were unnatural to his young

friend in health, and the doctor was instantly aroused in the man.

"What's the matter, Stanly?" he asked the boy.

"I don't know; tired, I guess," he replied.

"Here, let's see your tongue." The doctor spoke in a light tone of friendly banter, but he was not very light-hearted by this time, for his trained mind had instantaneously run over all the symptoms of distress he had unconsciously observed in his young companion during the last few months, symptoms which in anyone else would have quickly aroused his professional interest but which, in Stanly, had been passed over as natural results of hard study and close application and the deep enthusiasm which he knew so well. He had unconsciously made a diagnosis of the boy's case while he was asking him what the matter was and the conclusion he had reached was enough to make him feel grave.

The examination which followed was a very thorough and careful one and only confirmed the physician in his first opinion. When it was concluded, Stanly asked him what he had found, for he knew enough about diagnosis to see that his friend was taking unusual pains in examining his case, pains that seemed to the patient out of all proportion, and he also suspected

that his old friend was disturbed by his findings.

To his question the doctor replied by evading a direct answer, telling him to go over to the store and talk with the men that were always sure to be found on its porch at that time of day, while he fixed up some prescriptions that had to be filled that morning. "You are tired and had better rest awhile before we complete our lesson," he finished. "Come back in the course of half an hour and we'll finish this lesson and then I'll tell you some things about the operation I've decided to let you assist me with this afternoon."

When Stanly returned he found the doctor in his private office at a table all littered over with books. He motioned the boy to a seat on the other side of the table and went on reading.

Presently he laid down the book, cleared his throat in characteristic fashion and, after looking long at his young companion, as if hesitating to speak, at last found courage to say:

"Stanly, my boy, I feel that I must tell you something that it hurts me very deeply even to think is true. You are like a son to me and I hate to hurt you, but you must know it so that you may be able to take proper care of yourself. I'm afraid, my boy, that you have consumption. I feel that I am partly to blame for

its having reached its present serious stage, for I should have noticed long ago what was the matter with you, but we were together so much and under such conditions that I did not think of your being sick—such a thought never entered my mind—and I have let you go on developing the trouble right under my eyes without noticing it. When I examined you a while ago and found what your trouble is I was so shocked that I wanted a little time to myself to get hold of my faculties so that I could give the matter careful consideration. I thought that I might have made a mistake, although I knew that there was small chance for that, on account of the experience I have had with this disease. But much as I hate to think it, I am sure that my diagnosis was correct, and I'm afraid you're in for it. We'll have the other doctors examine you, too, though, and maybe they can give us some hope, but I don't want to raise false hopes in your mind and I think the best thing that you can do is to just realize how matters stand and prepare to meet them and make the best of them."

It is not hard to imagine the effect that this speech had upon Stanly. His happiness was effectually clouded now. This meant death to all his hopes, for he had been taught by common experience and the

books he was studying that consumption is of necessity sooner or later fatal. The doctor's words sounded like a knell of death to him and the thought of their meaning stunned him. Even the feverish light died out of his eyes, the flush paled on his cheek and his body sank down in his chair as if he were already dying. Moistening his dry lips he at last found strength to ask, "How long, doctor?"

The old man, with unnoted tears on his cheeks, suffering with the boy at the death of the hopes that he had helped to give birth, looked away and answered, "I don't know, Stanly. It may be a year, it may be two, or three, or even longer, or it may be only a few months. A great deal depends upon you and the care you take of yourself. You've a pretty strong constitution in spite of the fact that you have never had the best of health, and you can put up a good fight if you go about it right and keep up your courage, but I think it only fair that you should know that you have a well developed case and that it is only a question of time so far as I can see."

"Won't I be able to be a doctor?"

The boy knew the answer before he asked the question; he knew that there was only one reply that his friend could give him, and yet he could not give up his

dream so easily, and asked his question in the faint hope that the doctor might be able to give his great ideal at least a breath of life. The moment he had asked it he wished he had left his question unsaid and then hoped that the doctor would dodge the reply. And yet at the same time he hung eagerly on his words, anxious to hear either the sentence he dreaded or the alternative he had hardly dared hope for.

"I'm afraid not, my boy. You'll have to ease up on the books a bit, for awhile at least, and spend most of your time out of doors at some sort of light labor. You may be able to take them up again after awhile, but just now you had better drop them. I'll give you some directions about how you are to live, what you are to eat, and so on, and we'll see that you have the best possible chance to come out ahead of the Old Reaper. You may even be able to get well entirely, but I don't want to build up false hopes and make you careless about yourself."

"I did so want to be a doctor," the boy said, in a voice entirely devoid of hope. "I wish—Oh! What's the use of fighting? What matters now? And mother! Will she have to know? Oh, doctor! Can't there be some chance that you are mistaken, is there no chance at all that I can ever be——" and his

voice trailed off into a silence that told more plainly of his state of hopelessness than any words could have done.

His friend, reading in his face the boy's despair, sought to make him forget his trouble and to cheer him by diverting his mind into other channels. "Well, come, boy, there's no use in getting gloomy over what can't be helped; that won't help matters a bit, rather the opposite. Let's finish up this chapter and then see what we can find out about our little job for this afternoon."

So they turned to their interrupted lesson and endeavored to forget the pain that had come to both of them in the intermission, but with little success. The enthusiasm was gone from the student's heart, for he was not to be a physician, and these things no longer had any real meaning to him as was the case a few hours before. And the older man suffered with the boy and could not get his mind fixed upon the prosy virtues of mercury in its various forms, and found it almost as much of a task to be interested in the preparations for the operation which he was to perform in a few hours.

The remainder of this part of the tale is soon told. They went to other doctors in a hopeless quest for a

reason to hope and everywhere they went were given the same answer to the question which was already only too well answered: There was no hope; no one knew anything but death for the end of this disease; no one could promise many years of struggle before the grim reaper would gather in his harvest.

The boy that traveled back over that road as the shades of evening were falling on the fields, and creeping into the fence-corners, and under the trees, was a very different lad from the one who had gone into town over it in the early morning of the same day. Despair rode with him where before he had been companioned by hope. The light was out of his eyes, his shoulders stooped and his gaze was downcast. He no longer looked into a roseate future, but shrank with dread from seeing what it seemed to hold for him.

The stares of a few of the farmers he met told him that everyone would soon know his dreary secret if he let his face and manner tell tales. He had decided that he would keep the knowledge of his misfortune to himself, not even allow his mother to know till that became necessary, and thus spare himself the further burden of pity that would come from his friends knowing of his trouble. During the remainder of his homeward journey he schooled his face and form to their

natural expressions and laid plans for keeping up an appearance of good feeling and health that would prevent others from knowing what had come to him, and keep from his mother the knowledge that he knew would almost kill her if she should learn it.

In the days that followed he dropped his medical studies, giving her the excuse that the doctor had told him that he should not do any more reading now but should come to the office occasionally, and work out of doors the rest of the time. He let her know that the doctor wanted him to take better care of his health, but did not tell her how serious were his fears, nor how well founded. He went about his work at home and in public much as before and none of the neighbors suspected that he was carrying such a great burden of fear and disappointment in his heart.

CHAPTER II.

THE FINDING OF THE MESSAGE.

They had ears which heard not, and eyes that would not see, and their hearts were closed to the message which had been given them.

NOW THAT HE had been compelled to give up the study of medicine, Stanly's mind was without any settled occupation and it involuntarily cast about for something upon which to focus its unrestrainable energies. The seeming nearness of death led his thoughts to the subject of the hereafter and this naturally led him further to the reading of the Bible. He was a member of the Baptist church, and Sunday School, and sometimes teacher in the Bible classes, and was therefore pretty well acquainted with the Bible, but had never before read it with such deep interest as the circumstances of his present position inspired, and he now found many things in it which were entirely new to him. All of his energies gradually came to a focus on this one subject and he soon became as much interested in the Bible as he had formerly been interested in his books on medicine.

In his biblical studies he was helped a great deal by his mother and the plain, blunt, common sense of his father. His mother, a woman of unusual originality and insight, and fine education, had always been very closely connected with his intellectual development; she was, in fact, his principal source of inspiration and his chief instructor in most things. He had never attended school to amount to anything, but had picked up his education by reading and studying under his mother's direction. He naturally turned to her when he found something that he could not understand, and her unconventional woman's mind assisted him to many new and clearer interpretations which he had missed under the direction of the Sunday School teachers.

He became more and more deeply interested. The Bible and its teachings were almost his whole subject of thought and the expression of his religious aspirations became greatly strengthened and deepened. Naturally of an earnestly religious nature, he now became intensely so and it was not long after his thoughts had been turned into these channels till his voice began to be heard in the prayer meetings and even in the more pretentious services of the humble country church of which he was a member. He soon became locally famous as an "exhorter," and it was not many months

before he was studying for the ministry as hard as he had at one time been studying for the profession of medicine. This was contrary to the advice of his old friend and one-time teacher, the doctor, with whom the reader is already acquainted, but Stanly would not be checked in his new career by the advice of his medical friend, for he reasoned that if he was to die anyway, it did not make much difference whether it were now or a month hence, since he could not in any case hope to live long enough to accomplish anything worth while, and he would be happier preparing for a work that he might never live to do than he would be lying around waiting for and dreading death. Besides this, although he did not know it, he was in the grasp of an idea; a great desire; and no matter how much he might have wished to drop his work he would hardly have been able to do so. His interest chained him to it and left him no alternative.

Before six months had passed since he had heard the sentence of death pronounced upon himself, he was licensed to preach. Before he was ordained in the church there came a Sunday when the minister was not on hand and the congregation was left without a pastor. He was called upon to take the pulpit and gladly responded, for here was the very chance for which he

had been eagerly hoping; a chance to do something before he should be compelled by death to lay down his arms.

And he was prepared for just such an occasion. He possessed a book of sermons which he had studied and which he had also used as a guide in original Bible study, and there was one of these sermons which had especially attracted him and to which he had given much attention. He had even gone to the length of studying out an original sermon based upon the same text; a sermon which he had already delivered on several different occasions to the stumps in the Spring Pasture, but which he had hardly dared hope to deliver to a living audience before death should seal his lips.

This sermon was on the text (Mark 16-17) *And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

(18) *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

When the deacons asked him to take the pulpit that day he at once accepted and took his place with a heart beating high with joy and exaltation and thank-

fulness that this privilege was given him, to realize at least one of the dreams that were so dear to him.

He took up his Bible, and, as if some unseen power were behind him, directing and assisting him, the leaves fell open at the place where his chosen text was to be found. This incident gave him a mysterious pleasure and further confidence in himself, for he was very sincere in his belief in the power and watchfulness of the God he worshipped, and this seemed to him an omen that the one in whose ministry he was engaging was behind and helping him.

He announced his text and started in with the sermon that he had given to the stumps. As he went on, his voice, at first somewhat weak, gathered power; his keen mind cut deeper into his subject than ever before and under the inspiration of the occasion and the unconscious appeal of the listening congregation, he wandered away from the sermon that he had built on the foundation laid by the sermon in the book, and began to preach out of the inmost depths of his being, giving voice to truths which he had never before known that he knew, truths that he had learned in the deeper experiences of life and unconsciously stored away in the inner chambers of his mind without ever consciously knowing that they were his. He lifted up his con-

gregation by the simple force of his plain words; he convinced them by his keen reasoning; he made them feel that they had only just begun to live and he felt all of these things with them, only more deeply, possibly, than they, and then—

He had come to the part where Jesus said, *They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover*, and with his greatest inspiration; with the uplift and the power to make this the wonderful climax it seemed to him that it should rightly be, came the thought that he was even then sick and without hope of recovery; even then he was preaching what he felt might well be his last as well as his first sermon; preaching to a congregation of church members who at least pretended to "believe" and yet that he was sick; preaching to many who were at the moment almost if not quite sick as he, and yet they were still sick; they had not healed him and he had not healed them, neither had they nor he ever shown any of the other signs that Jesus said would follow on their belief; and he was for the moment struck dumb! He stood silent and pondered this problem, at a loss how to proceed, while the congregation who had not followed his thoughts beyond his words,

grew impatient, and restless, and his friends began to fear that he was going to fail after such a brilliant start for success.

He felt their eyes and their impatience and tried to proceed, but he could not, for he could not make anything out of the question except that he and the people to whom he was preaching did not believe or else that this statement was untrue. It must be one or the other; he could not dodge behind the sophistries of the other man upon whose sermon he had first modelled his own, for he could not remember them; he could not invent new excuses out of whole cloth, for the force of the personal application and the unequivocal plainness of Jesus' statement left him no room to dodge, even if he had not been too honest to do so when the matter was presented to him in this new light. He could not limit this promise to the people to whom Jesus had been speaking of the time that He made it, for the two verses immediately preceding the ones he had used for his text, made it evident that the Savior had spoken of all men and for all time. These verses seemed to stand out and accuse and threaten him every time that he thought of dodging the issue as he had heard it dodged so many times before. He could not get his eyes off of them when he would have looked up and made

ready to twist these statements so that they would make his preaching agree in some respect with his own actions and the practices of the church. In his pain and perplexity his thinking powers seemed to recoil and then stand still; he seemed no longer to think and he read over to himself time after time, *They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover, * * * he that believeth not shall be damned, * * ** And these signs shall follow them that believe; and then over them again from the first.

No, he could not get out of it; he either did not believe or else these words were untrue, and if these last words that Jesus had spoken to his beloved disciples were untrue, how much more likely to be false were all of those teachings and promises made on less impressive occasions. He could not think that they were untrue, and he could not think that he did not believe, and yet, he was sick and others in the congregation were sick, and their belief did not heal them.

Lost in the problem, he did not notice how time was going on, while the congregation waited for him to resume his interrupted sermon, till one of the old deacons of the church came up on the platform and placed his hand on the perplexed boy's shoulder.

Stanly looked up with a start and in an instant re-

alized the situation, and then before the old man could say anything, he said to the now tensely silent congregation, "And Jesus said, *they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover.* These are His last words to His faithful disciples, this is His last promise, the last injunction He laid upon them and other men whom they should reach with His teaching. This is the climax to His life with them, the climax and the capstone to His teaching and the message of love He brought to the world. We cannot think that He meant this promise for them alone, for He is talking of all men who shall believe, not to just these few, for He says just before this, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* And then He makes the promise and lays upon them the injunction which I chose for my text this morning.

"Do we believe? Do you, and you, and you, believe His promises true or do you think that He lied to you? I think that I believe and I also think that these promises are true, and yet I have never *cast out devils*, I have never spoken with *new tongues*; I have never done any of these other things and most of all, I have never laid my hands on the sick and healed them. Many of you are sick and I have not healed

you. Many among our congregation have died without any one among us even thinking enough of Jesus' word to try to heal them as He has told us that we could. I am sick and you have not offered to heal me, and what is more I have not the faith to try now and you have not; or if you have, if there are any among you who believe our Lord, who have faith in His promises, let him step forward and heal some of our sick.

"Do we believe? Is this promise, this last promise made to men by their Savior true? If we believe and it is true, then we should heal the sick by laying our hands on them. Do we do this? Are there any among you who have ever done it? Are there any who will do it now? Are there any who will even try it now?

"Brothers, we cannot dodge the question. We either do not believe or the last promise that Jesus made to us is false. Which is it? If it is true, then the mother who has sat by the cradle of her dying babe and not asked Jesus to make good that promise is either a hypocrite or a negative murderer of her own babe. For according to her professions, she believes, and according to this promise, that should be sufficient to heal her babe if she but lay her hands on its tortured

body; and for her to have the power to save its life and withhold that power is but little better than to exercise a positive power for its destruction. And if she does not believe when she says that she does, she is a liar and a hypocrite. And the rest of us are in the same fix, too. There are none of us who have not either lied about our faith in Jesus' words or have proven them untrue. Which is it?

"Brothers, I cannot dodge the question and I cannot answer it in any way to leave me honor among you and in my own estimate in the sight of God. I cannot preach more to you. We either believe or we do not believe and if we do believe and Jesus told the truth—and who is there here who will say that He did not?—we can heal our sick and cast out devils, and when we can do these things and do not do them we are not obeying the spirit of His teachings. He made it one of his chief concerns to heal the sick and He has laid the same task upon us, His followers.

"Brothers, when I can prove that saying of Jesus true, when I can prove my belief in Him by laying my hands on the sick and restoring them to health, then, and not till then will I finish this sermon. Till then I am through."

And with head bowed in humiliation, Stanly

stepped down from the pulpit, and before the stupefied audience could recover from the shock of his words, he had gone out through the open door and wandered out of sight into the woods that came up close to the church on three of its sides.

When they had awakened from their stupor, when they had thrown off the force of conviction that followed on his words—for there was not one of them who had doubted the truth of his message while he was delivering it; his earnestness and the strength of his own belief in what he was saying would not permit of denial; they forced belief—when he was gone and the people had come back to themselves and their old ways of thinking, pandemonium followed. Such an uproar of protest and denunciation as followed boded ill for him if he had been still in the church, but as they had nothing on which to focus their anger and indignation, their emotions soon burnt themselves out in words and the people comforted their outraged feelings by familiar sophistries and half-hearted condemnations of the man whom they still felt had spoken truth to them.

One among those who felt themselves the least bound to uphold the traditions of the church said to another, "The boy's right; there is no way of getting

around it. We've dodged the question too long already."

And a friend replied, "I don't see how we can get out of it. I think that some of the deacons and the most faithful of the women should put it to the test and I believe that whenever they do they will find that Jesus' words are just as true today as they were in the days of His life on earth. I'd like to see it tried, anyhow."

"Yes, so would I," the other said; and several bystanders murmured their approval, but none of them offered to be the one who should make the trial. Many were anxious to see the experiment tried by some one else, but no one was willing to try it for himself. Each felt that it was the other fellow's "belief" which should be tested; he had no confidence in his own.

The subject was soon dropped after it had taken this turn, and it was not resumed again except among friends in private conversation. Stanly's action would, ordinarily, have been sufficient ground for a church trial and discipline, but they were all still under the spell of the young enthusiast's words and sincerity; they still felt that he was more than half right; the sophistries with which they had formerly been successful in satisfying themselves, no longer quite satis-

fied, and they were none of them willing to have the question raised again when it might lead to a test of their faith. They had little confidence in its quality; they were afraid to have it put to the test. They were willing to make the supreme test of their belief in the truth and divinity of their Savior, the weekly testimony of the prayer meetings when they had nothing worse to meet than the eyes of their friends and sympathisers. They did not want to be called upon to put it to any greater test than the one of words and perhaps neighborly visits for gossip with the sick. They felt that they might be equal to the trial of accepting a foreign mission assignment, for their friends would all be behind them in that, and that was in conformity with the traditions of the church, but to try healing the sick by the laying on of their hands, to test their belief in Jesus in this manner would be new. They did not know how to start; they had never seen anyone else do it and they were not willing to run the risk of failure. In fact, they all felt that if they should try it they would fail; that they did not believe as Jesus would have had them believe and they were afraid to have their fellow churchmen know it.

They were in reality professing to a belief that they were not willing to have tested, preferring to lie to

themselves and others so long as that gave them the appearance of having what they felt that they did not possess, to honestly admitting that they were only half-believers, or to giving Jesus a chance to prove to them that He spoke truth for them.

They did not believe, and, when they suffered themselves to honestly take stock of their belief, they knew they did not. They knew it when they sat by the beds of the sick; when they followed the coffins of loved ones to their graves; when they themselves suffered the pains of disease. They knew that they did not believe when they tried to condemn Stanly for telling them the truth, where they had been so long used to being eased, and comforted, and flattered by sophistries.

They knew that they did not believe as they professed to do and they did not want to risk being brought to trial themselves. For this reason the boy's sermon soon became a tabooed subject of conversation and nothing was ever done to publicly reprove him for scandalising the traditions of the pulpit which he had endeavored to fill.

CHAPTER III.

A MOTHER'S PART.

"Colossal behind the achievement stands, Meekly, that angel, the mother!"

WHEN Stanly left the church he had no idea where he was going; he was not thinking about going any place. In fact, he was not thinking at all; he was stunned and his mind seemed at a standstill. He seemed incapable of any form of mental activity beyond the reading over and over of the words, *And these things shall follow them that believe, * * * they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover, * * * he that believeth not shall be damned.* These words danced before his eyes, accusing and threatening him.

He wandered thus for several hours before his faculties had recovered their balance. When he came to himself and looked around to see where he had wandered, he found himself on a high bluff overlooking a pleasant valley across the little creek that flowed at its base. Although he was familiar with the country and could have found his way through any part of it at night, he was for the moment unable to determine his location. When he finally realized where

he was he found that he had wandered far from the road that would have led him home, that he was then several miles further away from home than when he left the church. He felt tired and confused and did not know how he had come there, so he sat down on the head of the bluff to rest his body and puzzle the matter out.

As his mind ran back over the day's experiences in the effort to place this last one among them and find the sequence of events which led up to his being here so far away from home, he came again, in his thoughts, to the meeting and then to the sermon he had preached and finally, to the moment when he was confronted with the imperative question of testing of his own belief; and then the whole thing came back to him and again there came before his eyes the accusing words that had haunted him in his wanderings.

This was a very serious matter with him. It was not something that could be met with a shrug of the shoulders and passed by with the common saying, "it won't matter in a hundred years from now." To him it was something that mattered for all time, for eternity. He took Heaven and Hell and the teachings of his church very seriously, as things to be accepted without question, and he did not doubt for an instant

that, as things stood, he would go after death, to a place of eternal torment, to a material "Hell" of fire and brimstone as depicted by the preachers who had given him the larger part of his ideas of the hereafter, for he could not think that he believed as Jesus would have him do when he was not able to heal the sick, speak with tongues or cast out devils as the Savior had said that believers could do, and he could not see how he could get around the statement that *he that believeth not shall be damned*. It was a very serious and a pressing matter with him, for he was convinced that he was not long for the world; he was certain that it would not be long till he would be called upon to give the last account of himself and then be judged by his belief or unbelief. It was not a matter to be put off till next week or even till tomorrow; it was a matter of pressing importance, a matter which would not permit of the least delay.

For hours he revolved the question in his mind without coming to any solution of his difficulties and then, just as the sun tipped with red the trees on the hill-tops at the lower end of the valley, he knelt and prayed a half articulate, half unspoken prayer for assistance from on high.

"O Lord," he prayed, "help Thou my unbelief. Help me to find the way. Help me to believe, to

see the light, to live aright, to live the life—O Lord! I do not want to profess belief I do not really possess. I do not want to be a hypocrite. I do not want to lie to myself, and to others, to my mother—Jesus, help me.” And then his feelings, his yearnings became too deep and his heart too full of longing, for words, and he prayed the prayer of the heart, the truest prayer he had ever prayed.

And as he prayed he found quiet. The turmoil in his soul ceased and he rested in the feeling that somehow it would all come right, that while he could not see the way out just then, he would find it sometime.

Feeling comforted, he arose and walked homeward in the moonlight. When he had come to the home farm he struck into the path from the east pasture and soon came to the meadow gate, where he found his mother waiting for him. She had not known what was keeping him away all day, she had not known which way or when he would come home, and she had not learned anything about what happened at the church, for none of the family except himself had been there and the neighbors had not dared to come to tell her for the fear of meeting Stanly and starting the question which he had raised, but her mother heart had impelled her to wait for him at the meadow gate and

she was not surprised when she saw him coming up the path out of the woods.

Divining that something had happened and feeling that it was best for him to tell it in his own way and time, she said nothing but waited for him to speak.

"Have you heard?" he asked her.

"No, I have heard nothing, Stanly," she replied.
"What is it?"

He did not answer her for a time but stood and wondered dully how she would see it, how his sermon, his doubts and fears would appear to her. Now that he was trying to give an account of it to some one else, his actions seemed rather childish. The situation brought out the strong contrast between them and the actions of others who had filled the pulpit that he had unsuccessfully tried to fill. He saw in an instant how different he was from all the others; how he had set at naught the years and experience of men old enough to be his grandfather, some of the teachings of the church, some of its time-honored traditions; and what had seemed to him dishonest sophistries a few hours before seemed now, in his moment of doubt of himself, the possible explanations of difficult passages; explanations and interpretations which were beyond his understanding. He could not see how all of these older

men could be wrong and he, just a boy, be right. And he felt ashamed of himself where but a moment before, he had been merely perplexed and confused. He turned away his face that his mother might not see his shame and confessed to her his fault, feeling that he must confess and set himself right with her, at least, if he could not set himself right with all the others who had heard his foolish speech.

"I'm afraid, mother," he said, "that I made a sad fool of myself today. Brother Bacon could not come to church today and sent word that did not reach us till just before the meeting, and they called on me to take the pulpit. I was glad to have the chance, for I felt that I could preach a good sermon and I wanted to do what I could for the church. I took the text *And these signs shall follow them that believe*, and did very well till I came to the place where I sought to explain the verse *they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover*, and then something went wrong and I could not remember what I had always thought that meant; I could not make it mean anything except just what it said, and I could not see how it meant anyone but me and all the rest who pretend to believe in Jesus' word and divinity; and I could not say that we could lay our hands on the sick and heal

them for I knew that there was not one there who would even have the faith to try; and I could not say that this was untrue. I could not make anything out of it except that we do not believe, that we are all unbelievers and hypocrites, and I could not go on. I just stood there like I had lost my wits, and I had, almost, till Brother Davis came and put his hands on my shoulder to ask me what was wrong, or wake me up, or something, and then before I thought, I told them what that passage meant to me, what the whole text then meant to me, that it was Jesus' last and greatest, His supreme promise and an injunction as well, and that if those signs did not prove our faith we either did not believe, or else that Jesus had lied to us. And I asked them whether they had ever healed the sick by the laying on of hands, in His name, and whether any of them had faith to try it then and I wound up by telling them that I could not preach again till I could prove to them that I believed by showing them the signs that Jesus had said would follow on belief and trust in Him and His message. And then I left there and wandered without knowing where I was going till I came to the bluff above Joe Richardson's place, and I've been there all the rest of the day trying to find out where I stood and what I had done. At sunset I prayed—" He stopped without finishing the

sentence and waited for her to pass judgment upon his actions.

He waited in a very different attitude of mind from that with which he had started to tell her his story. He was again convinced of the truth of his position, and the importance of his own opinion had again overshadowed the opinions and traditions of the church, in his mind. He was now ready to defend his interpretation of the text against the objections of even his mother.

She was silent for a long time, a time long enough to start him again to doubting himself, before she spoke.

"No, Stanly," she said, "you did not make a fool of yourself. A man cannot make a fool of himself when he speaks from his heart what he sincerely believes. If you believe what you said, and I know that you did, you did the only honest and sensible thing in saying it. You would have made a fool of yourself if you had done otherwise. Of course, the people will very likely think that you have done as you have accused yourself of doing, and they would as likely have applauded you for beating around the bush and telling them what they had always heard and already believed and what left them with their respect for themselves; but that would not matter to you if you are

as honest and sincere as I would have you and as I think that you are. The only thing that can matter to you is whether or not your actions are sincere expressions of your thoughts. The honest man never makes a fool of himself however much other folk may think that he has. If you believe what you said, you did only right in saying it, and I am proud of you for being honest when it hurt so much to be."

"I do believe it," he replied. "I do believe it and I would have to say the same thing again if placed under the same circumstances. I see no way to get around it; it is either true or untrue and if true, and I think that I believe that it is, we either believe or do not believe and I cannot think that we believe when we cannot do what Jesus' promise says that we can. No, I can make nothing else of it. We do not believe."

"It looks like you are right," she said when he had stopped. "I see no fault with your reasoning but I have not studied the text very much and I cannot help you out with it till I have. Besides that, you will have to fight this out for yourself as you have had to fight all of your other battles of faith. It does not help you for me to do your thinking for you and you do not need me to do it. You would not be able to understand what I meant if I should try to explain it to you, till

you had made your mind capable of producing the thought I might express and it cannot help you to develop your mind for me to tell you things that you do not understand. For this reason I shall not make much effort to assist you in this. Take your Bible and go apart by yourself, away from other men and what they have thought and said, and study the whole thing from beginning to end and see, there may be something that will give you yet another light which will show you the way even clearer than you now see it and remove and blot out all of your difficulties."

They stood together for some time without saying anything more and then Stanly said as much to himself as to her, "I believe that I will find the way, that I will come to understand or, if I already understand that there must be some way, that I shall be able to show the signs that Jesus said would follow. When I prayed tonight, I seemed to grow into a realization of peace and trust in the outcome of my difficulty and I still feel that peace and trust when I can forget for the moment the difference between the stand that I have so suddenly taken and the stand taken by the other people of our church. Can it be, mother, that all of these are wrong and I am right? Can it be that I have found what they have all missed for so long, or

that I have been the first to refuse to cover up and go around and lie to myself about what I feared to accept? How is this possible?"

"Now Stanly," she said, "I want you to stop right where you are and take stock of yourself. You must forget all about what others think about this or any other matter that does not affect your relations with them. This is a matter between you and your own Creator and Christ Jesus your Savior, and can be decided only by you. What others think about it can matter only to them unless you choose to make them judges for you, and even then you are in reality deciding that their opinion is the best and the decision is none the less yours. This is something that you have to decide. Others cannot decide it for you, and for you to even consider them in it is likely to lead you into the most grievous error of making their opinion of you the reward you seek rather than the feeling that you are being honest with your God and Savior. Besides that, you run the risk of taking pride in what you may easily regard as a discovery of yours and from that mistake it is not far to the greater one of drawing comparisons between yourself and them, and thinking of yourself as a brave explorer of new fields, a prophet and a reformer, at which pass, you will without doubt begin

truly making a fool of yourself, for you will no longer be honest with yourself nor with anyone else. You will begin to pose and look about for followers and it will not be long from this till you are as prideful and snobbish as possible.

“Leave other people and their opinions out of this matter when you are deciding whether you are right: There is time enough to consider what they think after you have decided. It need not matter to you whether this has been known before or whether you have only just discovered it. Nothing in man’s past, present, or future relations with it can make any difference in its truth and the truth is all that concerns you. Be honest, my boy, and the rest will not matter, and if you would be honest in this, leave other people out of the question. Do not ask even me for an opinion till you have made your decision, and I shall not volunteer it, of that you may be sure. Come to me and tell me what you think, when you wish, and I will help you to clearer thinking if I see any flaws in your reasoning, but you must not ask me or anyone else to decide the question for you; you must make that decision for yourself.”

Stanly did not reply and they both fell silent and after awhile walked up to the house and without a

word, parted for the night. She understood perfectly what was in his mind but he little guessed how she yearned to take him into her motherly arms and comfort and quiet him, if she dared. But she thought more of his future peace and development than of his present ease and understood that if she gave him any assistance now, she would only help to lay the foundation for a future dependence and the attendant doubts and uncertainties. She realized that he was now in a confused state of mind and that what he mistook for trustful peace was in part at least, mental inactivity, the resultant reaction from the period of turmoil through which he had just passed. And she knew that when he had rested and his mind returned to the problem, he would be again assailed by the old doubts of himself that he would, in spite of his efforts to prevent it, in spite of her advice and her warning, contrast his own opinions with the opinions of others and that it would only make it all the harder for him if she did anything to help him now. She was suffering the mother's pain of seeing her child compelled by nature, to fight its battles alone and unaided, but she suffered in silence, and he never understood.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SEARCH.

"Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall open unto you."

A WEEK had passed before his mind recovered from the stupor that followed that memorable Sunday's experiences. It was a week spent, to all outward appearances, much as he had spent the others which immediately preceded it except that he no longer studied the Bible and was more silent about his work, but it was a time very different in reality from any other equal period in his whole previous life. His reason seemed asleep and his whole mind was torpid. He would take up his Bible and try to read but he could not become interested in it; he could not even read his other books nor take any interest in conversation. He had gone through a greater strain than anyone realized, himself least of all, and his mind was taking a rest.

When Sunday morning had come again, before he had given the matter thought, he prepared to go to church as it was his habit, and then, just when he was

ready to go, came the thought of his failure of the week before and he realized that he would find attendance at the little church in the woods anything but pleasant that morning. He saw that he could not go. He put his horse back into the pasture, an unexpected vacation for which it was properly grateful, and got his Bible and went down to the grove around the spring to think it over.

Then the problem was revived with all of its force. His mind was fully awake to his difficulty once more. He was no longer the dawdler. He was now intensely alive and interested and if he had wished to ever so much, he could not have taken his attention from his subject.

He went over again the events of that last Sunday and tried to discover any possible loophole that would suffer him to think that he could honestly have acted otherwise; and he could not find it. He could see no place where he could have done other than he did and he could see nothing that would permit him to think that he was wrong in his decision. Jesus' words could mean nothing else than what they said and he could not imagine how he had dodged their meaning so long as he had, now that he saw them in their true light. He would not think it possible that all the ministers to

whom he had listened in the same and other pulpits, had failed to see it as he now saw it, and yet he could not see how it was possible for them to stand in what was to him, the most sacred, the most important position that a man could occupy; stand as the minister of God to men and betray his trust with both by lying to one about the other, as he would do, who would twist the text around to make it seem to mean something that he knew it does not mean.

"But perhaps they did not see it," he thought. "Perhaps they were so blinded by tradition and time-honored teaching that they could not see its real meaning but saw only what their teachers had taught them to see in it, what their parishioners wanted them to see. It cannot be, no, it is unbelievable that they could have seen it as I do and yet preached like the laity wanted them to in order to hold their positions. They would not do such a thing as that while standing as ministers of God. They have not seen it, that is certain! They are God's ministers and would be true to that trust, no matter what came of it. They could not be liars in such a position!"

And then he drifted into reverie, a reverie that carried him far into the future that he had mapped out for himself before he had closed the doors of the pul-

pit by his innovation. He thought again of the great work that he would do, how he would talk to the people from his precarious position half in and half out of the grave, talk to them of the true life and the heaven of eternal bliss beyond the grave, till the very gates of death shut to and stilled his voice; how he would make them listen to him and how he would convince them that he spoke truth, that Jesus' way was the only way; and how he would at last die happy, no matter how soon or late that might be, conscious that he had done his best for God and man while he had strength to do at all. He went over again the circumstances which favored his success in this mission, and thought of how he was exceptionally placed for just this work, for he knew that life for him was but a few years at best; there was no one who depended upon him for support, and money and earthly rewards meant nothing to him and, hence, there would be no tendency for him to commercialize his message or his efforts. Neither would there be any inducement to step aside from the path he had laid out to follow, and he could do this work sincerely and whole-heartedly as it should be done; give his life, all that was left of it, without reserve, to this one purpose.

As he reviewed his old plans, he forgot for the mo-

ment, that this was but another broken dream of the past, that this ministry had been interrupted by his own action as his other ministry to the sick had been interrupted by fate. He forgot for the moment that he had renounced the pulpit and had effectually closed the doors of the church's inner circle against himself, that he must always hereafter be an alien among the people whom he had intended to lift up to the sublimest heights of religious realization, and it was with a distinct shock that he again realized what he had done, how he had placed himself with his fellows, had shattered his last and dearest dream.

"Why did I do it?" he asked himself. "Why did I have to do it? Why could I not go on as I started, as many another has gone on before me and will doubtless go on after me, and see in the words of Jesus what has always been seen in them, what has helped so many people and what they want me to see now? Why did I have to be different from the others?"

"I could have helped them, I know that I could have helped them, for I have nothing else to live for, nothing to distract me, nothing to do but deliver my message to them before I die. Why could I not give it to them? I could have helped them, I know that I could. I did help them before I did the foolish thing

that made it impossible for me to ever face them again. I could feel that I was giving them new life, a new inspiration and I could do it again and do it better if I had only left for myself the smallest chance. Why did I do it?

"I did so want to be a preacher. And now I can neither be a doctor nor a preacher. I can't be anything. And no wonder? It was the height of presumption for me to even aspire to stand before men as the minister of God on earth and nothing short of criminal for me to think of going into the sickroom with my tendency to streaks of Quixotism and my unhappy faculty for seeing things differently from everyone else. I'm a fool, and it's a good thing that I'm finding it out."

Delivering this heroic speech to the leaves above his head, with a deep conviction born in his disappointment and a galling bitterness of heart, he arose to relieve his emotions with movement, when the Bible which had lain the while unnoticed in his lap, fell to his feet and attracted his attention. This diverted his mind from his bitter thoughts of self condemnation. He took up the book and sat down again and began idly turning through its pages. It seemed fated to keep his trouble before his mind for it turned easily to the last

chapter of Mark and there again staring up at him, compelling his attention, was the text upon which he had wrecked his prospect for a successful ministry.

Half automatically he read it through and again the force of his idea struck him. "No! I'm right!" he almost shouted. "I'm right, it can mean nothing else and I'll stand or fall by my belief in Jesus' promise and my understanding of His words. I'm right, and whether it means eternal damnation or everlasting bliss, I must be honest with myself and my God. I guess if He had meant for me to be otherwise than as I am He would have made me so and I cannot help it if He has made me so different from other men. I am only what I am and it is not for me to question His purposes. Neither is it in my power to say how much of what I am is due to my own actions and how much of it comes from His hand: I cannot sit in judgment on His work. All that I can do is to be honest and if I am wrong I shall at least have been sincere and there must be some virtue in that. It will be hard but I must do it. I cannot go to my Creator as I soon shall have to do, with a lie on my lips. I cannot believe one thing about my Savior and say another even if all my friends, my mother and all of humanity say I am wrong and ask me to recant."

And kneeling he prayed again for help from the God on high, who was so very real to him, whose interest in his welfare he never doubted.

"O Lord," he prayed, "help me! Give me strength! Keep me innocent of lies about you!"

It was a simple prayer and a brief one, but it was one that meant much to the ardent boy under the burr oak. His rantings and heroics were very serious to him at that time. Life was very real and exceedingly earnest and his difficulty the most important thing in the whole world. He has smiled since to think how he posed as a very heroic figure before himself while passing through his stress period, how he magnified the attitude of his neighbors towards his offense and how his enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which amounted almost to fanaticism, distorted everything out of all just proportion. But he did not see things in this light that day nor for many a long day thereafter. It was all very real and important then.

Rising from his knees he again opened his Bible. "Let's see," he said, "Jesus said other things like this. Let's see how they agree with this last promise as I understand it. Yes, here in the 12th verse of the 14th chapter of John He says the same thing in other words, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on*

*me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father * * * And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* That can mean nothing else than just what it says and He was not speaking of the disciples entirely, either, for He does not say, *You that believeth*, but *he that believeth*, and then back here in the sixth verse He says, *NO man cometh unto the Father, but by me!* He doesn't refer there to just the few men that He is addressing. He is talking of all men. It is plain enough that He means just what He says.

“Why should I try to twist it around to make it mean something that will make my belief easier and not put it to any tests? I see no reason for distorting this and the other verse to mean what it evidently does not in order that I may be able to appear to others to have a belief which I evidently do not possess, for that would profit me nothing else; it would not make my belief any more acceptable in His eyes but would really make me less a follower of and believer in Jesus and His message. No! He means just what He says and nothing else, and when I have really come to believe in Him these signs shall prove it. Till then evidently

I do not believe, however much I may think that I do.

"I guess I am like the disciples when they could not cure the lunatic. Let me see, where is that? Yes here it is in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew; Jesus tells them that they failed because of their unbelief, He said, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* And I believe that He was talking as much to me and the other believers of this and all other generations as to His disciples, for He has said that he comes for the whole world and I do not see how if such faith would enable those men to move mountains, it would not do the same for me. Here it is (1 John, 2:2), *and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* And it is evident from this that faith or belief in Him, that is, in the actuality of His existence, is not sufficient, for His disciples could not have doubted that He lived while He was among them; they must have doubted the truth of His words or their own power to execute His injunctions, or perhaps, they doubted their own belief. Whatever their doubt it was of some other nature than a doubt of the reality of Jesus. It is evident then, that He meant by belief,

something more than the belief we profess when we say that we believe that He was the Son of God and all that, when we testify at meeting. It must be some greater faith than that which is content with words and the more or less perfunctory observance of meaningless rites and rituals; it must mean something more than anything connected with our church services and experiences, for on this sort of belief the signs that He said would follow on the right kind of belief, the kind that He considered belief; on the kind of belief that we profess and think that we possess, these signs have never followed. None of us can show them. We do not believe!"

Again his old doubts were revived and again he went over in his mind the reasons for and against his idea that he did not possess the belief that Jesus had spoken of to His disciples. When he had gone over the whole ground again, he turned once more to his Bible to see what he could find there relating to the subject.

In the nineteenth verse of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew he found what seemed to him a further confirmation of his idea that Jesus had not limited his promise to just the few to whom He spoke and that He had not limited the scope of His promise. He read,

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. To the puzzled boy this seemed a promise to him and all other men of all time.

Then in the next verse he found the further assurance, *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*"

"There," he said, "that says nothing about applying to only a few people of one time, but evidently includes all men of all time. Yes, without doubt He was the savior of all men as well as of a few and if He was their savior in one sense, if He made some of His promises to all, He surely made *all* of them for *all* men as well. John thought that Jesus came for the whole world and we have been taught all of our lives that He is our Savior as well as the King of the Jews in the moral and other senses in which we were not afraid to accept Him; why should we not accept His promises in other things as well? I guess it will not make much difference to Him that we are afraid to accept Him in this sense as well as the others. At any rate, He will not think any more of our faith in Him on account of our cowardice.

"It is evident that the disciples had this same notion

that Jesus meant for *all* who believed in Him to heal the sick, for here in James' General Epistle to the Twelve Tribes he says in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the fifth chapter, *'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.'* This he includes with his other instructions and exhortations in a manner that places it on a par with everything else he says. He does not speak of it as if it were something figurative to be twisted around to mean other than what it says, neither does he mention it as something of special significance as if he thought it were a special thing to be dropped or disregarded upon occasion. He evidently regards this as an essential part of the message that Jesus brought to man, a part of the work that He left for him to do. If Jesus had intended for the healing of the sick to be limited to the disciples or the 'seventy' he would have been very apt to make this plain to them and James would not be found instructing other later believers that they could do the same thing and in such a manner that he evidently takes for granted their compliance and success. I guess if I have misunderstood Jesus' message, I am not alone in my fault, for at least one of His disciples has understood it to have the same meaning."

CHAPTER V.

THE VALUE OF FAITH.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, * * * nothing shall be impossible unto you."—(Matt. 17:20.)

MUCH COMFORTED by the thought that his understanding of Jesus' words was the same as that of his intimate pupils while on earth, Stanly searched further through the Bible to see if it offered further verification of this idea.

He found that the disciples and the apostles attached much importance to healing as a part of their work. For instance in Acts he read (5:11-12-15-16): *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. * * * Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one!*

(Acts 3:2) *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;*

(6) *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

(7) *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

(Acts 8:6) *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

(7) *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.*

(Acts 9:33) *And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.*

(34) *And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.*

(Acts 9:36) *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is*

called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.

(37) And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

(40) But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

(Acts 14:8) And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

(9) The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

(10) Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

(Acts 16:16) And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.

(18) And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

(Acts 19:11) *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.*

(12) *So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

(Acts 20:9) *And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.*

(10) *And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.*

(12) *And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.*

(Acts 28-8) *And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.*

(9) *So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:*

He found out all of these accounts, which indicate that the apostles, after the death of Jesus, paid a great deal of attention to the matter of healing the sick, and several others, which seemed to him as he read them

to indicate that these followers of the Master expected others to do the same thing and that they accepted this as one of their chief duties in connection with their teaching and ministry among the people. All of this lent force to his conviction that the disciples understood Jesus' message as he did.

He found one place in Acts where Peter said (Acts 3:16): *And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all*, which meant to him that it was not some special quality in Peter which had healed the lame man but rather the man's faith in Jesus, the faith that he himself and all of the other men and women of their church professed but were afraid to put to any crucial test.

And this gave him a new idea, an idea that paralyzed all thought for a moment. Then when he had begun to grasp its full significance, as he did after a few moments, the blood surged back to his face and his countenance lighted up with a divine hope, and he sprang to his feet with the intention of running to tell his mother of the great discovery he had made. He jumped the little stream that trickled away from the spring and ran up the hill. About half way up the steep slope he stopped, chilled by a sudden doubt, and

turned about and walked slowly back again, now faint and sick, when robbed of the hope that had given him the new life which had just died out of his eyes. He felt that he had hardly strength to get back to his Bible under the tree and he chided himself that he had forgotten that he was sick and had perhaps overtaxed his strength and fatally shortened his life on account of an idea which might have no other foundation than a wild hope.

But even as he condemned himself for his rashness the thought came back to him with almost its former force.

"It is faith that heals and my own faith would heal me if I but believed sufficiently," he reasoned with himself. "It is the faith of the sick man as often as the faith of the healer that does the work. Here Peter says that it was the faith of the sick and Jesus has said the same thing in regard to some of the cases that He healed. And according to the Bible, Jesus Himself was limited by the unbelief of the people in Galilee. Where is that? Yes, here it is (Matt. 13:58), *And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* The belief of the patient evidently meant a great deal to Jesus. Yes, I believe I am right. I can heal myself if I can only believe."

This was the idea which had started him bounding to tell his mother and if he had only known it, he probably possessed the adequate belief in that brief moment that intervened between his grasping the idea and acknowledging the doubt that stopped him and brought him back, sick and worn, to his seat under the tree. Now he was doubting himself and his understanding of Jesus again. He was, in fact, doubting the power of the Word itself. He was doubting everything. But he was doubting himself most of all. He could not think that Jesus could be wrong and yet he could not believe that he had the power in himself to heal others, or to heal himself.

Torn between the new hope he had found and the fear that his doubts engendered, he sat there for a long time thinking, thinking, seemingly only to get farther and farther away from a solution of the question. It was long past time for the noonday meal to which his brother had called for him loudly enough to be heard to the farthest corner of the little farm without attracting the attention of the puzzled lad by the spring. His mother had started out to look for him and had seen him from afar, and guessed his occupation and out of consideration for him, thinking that he would do better to work out his problems than to be interrupted

for a meal that she would be glad to give him whenever she had the opportunity and he was ready for it, she had gone back to dinner, telling the others that he was all right and to leave him alone.

After he had spent a long time in the fruitless turning over of the question, he again turned to his Bible without any definite thought of looking for any particular thing, but more with the idea of doing something, of occupying his mind with something else than the problem that seemed to grow more difficult the more he thought of it. It seemed that Fate had determined that he should not escape his difficulty, for the Bible fell open at the eighteenth chapter of Luke where he found the story of the blind man whom Jesus cured on the road to Jericho.

He read it through:

(Luke 18:35) *And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging:*

(36) *And hearing the multitudes pass by, he asked what it meant.*

(37) *And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.*

(38) *And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

(39) *And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

(40) *And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him,*

(41) *Saying, what wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.*

(42) *And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.*

(43) *And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

When he had come to the end and had seen that this was one of the cases where Jesus attributed the recovery of the patient to his own faith, he felt a sudden renewal of his confidence in the idea that his own belief in Jesus would cure him.

Then he turned to Mark, where he remembered that the same story was told again, and there found that this disciple had told it as Luke had. (Mark 10:52) *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole,* he read.

He set out to see how often Jesus had said the same

thing to others whom He had healed. In the ninth chapter of Matthew he found the following:

(Matt. 9:27) *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*

(28) *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*

(29) *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*

(30) *And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straightly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.*

According to your faith be it unto you, he quoted. "Not according to Jesus' faith, but according to the man's own faith. The man had full faith, I could be well also by calling on Jesus' name if I only believed."

Reasoning thus he read them through, as many as he found in the whole New Testament. Of these, many seemed especially meant to convince him that he could heal if he could believe. Here are some more of the stories he read:

(Matt. 8:6) *And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.*

(7) *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*

(8) *The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

(9) *For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

(10) *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

(13) *And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

Then he found the same story in the seventh chapter of Luke with the same reason given for the healing of the centurion's servant.

The next account of healing which laid special emphasis upon the value of the patient's faith was in Matthew.

(Matt. 9:2) *And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

(6) * * * (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), *Arise take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*

(7) *And he arose, and departed to his house.*

This account the boy found duplicated in the second chapter of Mark and the fifth chapter of Luke, and in both places Jesus is made to place great stress upon the faith shown by those who brought the sick man to him. Indeed, in the other two accounts of this case of healing the chroniclers tell that the people believed so fully in Jesus' power to heal him that they thought it worth while to make a hole in the roof to let the sick man down into the room at the Master's feet.

Stanly thought of this long, and then found the story of the woman with an issue of blood.

This story he found told briefly in the ninth chapter of Matthew and at more length in the gospel of Mark and then again in the eighth chapter of Luke. In all cases Jesus laid the woman's healing to her faith.

After he had read these accounts he turned back and read again the story as told in Mark.

(Mark 5:25) *And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,*

(26) *And had suffered many things of many phy-*

sicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.

(27) *When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.*

(28) *For she said, if I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*

(29) *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*

(30) *And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?*

(31) *And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*

(32) *And he looked round about to see her who had done this thing.*

(33) *But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.*

(34) *And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.*

The reader found many things in this story about which to think, but he was so closely wrapped up in

his interest in the value of faith in healing, as accomplished by Jesus, that he did not give other points much attention, but quickly sought out another account bringing out the same idea. Here is the next story he found:

(Matt. 15:22) *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

(23) *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

(24) *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

(25) *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

(26) *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs.*

(27) *And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*

(28) *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

Great is thy faith, great is thy faith, he quoted. "Jesus attached so much importance to faith that he seemed to almost make that a necessary condition to healing. Let's see; Where is that about the faith as a grain of mustard seed?" And he turned again to his Bible.

(Matt. 17:14) *And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,*

(15) *Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

(16) *And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

(17) *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.*

(18) *And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.*

(19) *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

(20) *And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this moun-*

tain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

When he had finished reading this account in Matthew and the accounts of the same incident that are to be found in the ninth chapter of Mark and the ninth chapter of Luke he leaned back against the tree and wondered about what he had read.

“Not only did He attach importance to the sick person’s faith but he evidently attributed His disciples’ failure to their lack of faith. And then He said that a mountain could be moved by a very little real faith and I don’t believe he meant a figurative mountain, either, for He pointed out a real mountain. ‘Yonder mountain,’ He said.”

Then the puzzled lad found out and read as many more of these stories as he could. The next he read was in Mark.

(Mark 5:22) *And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet.*

(23) *And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.*

(35) *While he yet spake, there came from the*

ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, *Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?*

(36) *As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.*

(38) *And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.*

(39) *And when He was come in, He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*

(40) *And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.*

(41) *And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talithacumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.*

(42) *And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.*

And again, the same story in Luke.

(Luke 8:41) *And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue;*

and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house.

(42) For he had one only daughter about twelve years of age and she lay a-dying. But as he went the people thronged Him.

(49) While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

(50) But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

(51) And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

(52) And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

(53) And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

(54) And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

(55) And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway; and He commanded to give her meat.

And, finally, the story of the healing of another sick boy whom He did not even go to see.

(John 4:46) So Jesus came again into Cana of

Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

(47) When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

(48) Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

(49) The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

(50) Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

(51) And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

(52) Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

(53) So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

When he had read through the last account Stanley closed his Bible and leaned back against the trunk of the tree under which he was sitting, to think over what he had read.

"All of these were cured of their diseases because of their belief in Jesus. It is impossible that this is just the idea of the disciples who wrote the occurrences, for it is the same in all of them. They all tell of His saying the same thing, *According to your belief be it unto you, * * * If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth, * * * Thy faith hath saved thee, * * * As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee; * * * Thy faith hath made thee whole, * * * Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt; * * * If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, * * * Be not afraid, only believe* all proofs of the value that Jesus set upon belief in Him, also proofs that where faith really exists the sick can be healed and the dead raised up. In fact, it would seem that anything else that the believer desired would be done for him."

Opening his Bible again, Stanly hunted for a verse that he dimly remembered having read there. He found it in Mark, the 24th verse of the eleventh chapter: *Therefore, I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

"Here," he thought, "is another promise that the prayer of faith will do whatever is desired by the be-

liever. Jesus does not limit His promise, why should I? He does not say, What things soever I think it is best for ye to have, nor, If God wants ye to have these things ye shall receive them, nor, My disciples shall have whatever they pray for, but He says, *What things soever ye desire*, placing no limit whatever on the things that the prayer of faith will bring to the believer."

He found a further verification of this idea in the verse just preceding that one. There he read, *Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

"There," he said to himself, "Jesus says plainly, *whosoever*, and that means not only just the disciples, but, rather, any person on earth who really believes. The trouble with us is that we do not believe. We are not like the man who thought it unnecessary for Jesus to even go to his house to heal his servant. He thought that Jesus had only to command it to be for it to come about and the result followed. And in this case it was the belief of another that healed the man, not even the patient had to believe; if some one

only believed that was enough. And then I profess to believe in Jesus, I get up in the church and say that I believe in Him and His word at the same time that I am expecting to die before I have lived out my time of usefulness on earth; at the same time that I know that He has said that if one believes he can do anything that he wishes, and a whole lot more to the same effect. I'm a hypocrite and that is all that there is to it. I just do not believe and it is no excuse for me that none of the other members of the church are any more genuine than I. That is no excuse for me. If they want to go on professing to lies and comforting themselves with sophistries and the satisfaction of having their neighbor's approval, bought with the same coin of deceit, that is their privilege, but it does not give me any excuse for doing likewise. That is something that is between me and my Creator and Jesus Christ. He is my judge, not they.

"I am a hypocrite and a liar about my belief in Jesus or else He is a liar and undeserving of my trust, and that I'll never believe, even though I never learn to believe in Him as He would have me do. He has made us promises without any limit placed upon them, He has promised us anything that we want if we will but produce the conditions for the fulfillment of those

promises and we, because we do not produce those conditions; because we do not believe, because we doubt Him and ourselves and God and everything; because we fail to receive without doubt what He has said would come to us only as the result of believing, set in judgment on His words, twist them around to make it seem that we have done what He has demanded of us and that He has given us everything that we would merit if we had fulfilled His wishes, and then, to cap it all, we set ourselves up in judgment on each other; make us some creeds and appoint deacons and ministers to say when we have fulfilled our part of the contract with Jesus; when we believe in Him and when we are entitled to call ourselves His followers. O! We are nice Christians, all right! We are followers of the Gentle One! We are believers!

“No, we’re none of these things. We’re liars and hypocrites and fools and arrogant, bigoted Pharisees who would make ourselves judges of each other in spite of the fact that He has told us to not judge each other, and then, not content with that, we make ourselves judges of God and Jesus and their words and pretend to stand as arbiters between God and other men, saying when our brothers believe and when they do not believe. Jesus did not ask anyone to do that.

He did not even do it Himself, He said that there were certain signs that would show the believer to the world. The things that He could do were the witnesses of the believer. His actions were his own judges in Jesus' eyes. And the only reason that these signs do not follow the professed believers in Jesus in these later days, is that they do not believe. In the earlier days the people believed. No wonder they were cured of their ills when they would set their sick out in the streets in order that the shadow of Peter might fall on them as he passed and, falling on them, cure them. They believed so in Jesus that they expected even the shadow of one of His disciples to cure people who were so sick that they had to be carried into the streets in their beds. No wonder they could be healed by the word, or by the touching of a garment, or by the passing of a shadow. Nowadays, if someone were to come to Jesus and ask to be healed he would be surprised if it really happened.

"We're all like the old woman who read the eleventh chapter of Mark and then decided to try a prayer on a rose bush that she wanted moved to another position in her yard, and was not surprised when it was not moved by her prayer. That is the way with the rest of us. We pull down our blinds and go into our clos-

ets and make a great pretense at praying; and ostentatiously pray in public; we observe all of the rituals and make all the show of praying, but that is all there is to it; there is no faith in our hearts; we do not believe, and if we pray for something we go quickly to see if we really have had our prayer answered. If one of us should have a prayer answered we would be so surprised and count it such a strange thing, that we would run to tell all the neighbors about it, and have special meetings, and give thanks to God as if He had done something out of the ordinary and was to be appropriately thanked and congratulated on that account. We do not believe. We believe that we believe, and then we pray, and when we do not get the answer to our prayers we start in and try to find some other meaning for that part of the Bible that would make us think that we should have had the answer which did not come. We look for the fault in the Bible where it is not to be found instead of in ourselves, where it really exists. Finally, we come to believe our own sophistries and the lies that we know our brothers in the church are living and become satisfied with their approval of our professions and expect their opinions of us to get us into heaven, to make it all right with the Father and the Son and excuse us from the

proofs that He demanded of us. We are content to have men think that we are right and agree with us when we twist Jesus' words to suit our convenience. Yes, we're a nice bunch of Christians, we are."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEST OF FAITH.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe."—(Mark 16:17.)

STANLY was thoroughly disgusted by this time and ready to say almost anything harsh about himself. He had come to the point where he could see only the mistake that he had been making, could see only the bad side and, with his eyes focused entirely on this one thing, the enormity of his offense seemed beyond all telling.

His was a deep, sincere nature that could accept no compromise with honesty in the things that were really worth while to him, and to whom religion and all forms of religious expression were of overmastering importance. There was no playing at religion possible to him. It was either so or it was not so; it was either right or it was wrong, either yes or no. There were no half-way stations in his conceptions of moral questions, and he could not consciously yield a qualified belief to the sayings and teachings of Jesus. To him they were either true or untrue and he could not think but that they were wholly true. He was not

one who could be content to take what seemed to be a plain statement of fact and twist it around to suit his own wishes under the pretense that it was allegorical or that what was truth in other days had now become untrue. He was what might be called a literalist, and yet he was not unaware of the fact that much of the teaching of the Master was conveyed in the form of parables. He was able to understand the parables, but he did not feel that he was privileged to call everything a parable that he could not make fit his own desires and he did not presume to tamper with the meaning of the Bible.

Couple all of these traits with his youth, his native enthusiasm and studious habits and the circumstances in which he found himself situated with the church, which had for so long meant so much to him, and his belief that he had but a short time to live; and it is not hard to understand how real and important all of these things seemed to him; how much difference it made to him, whether he thought that he was a true believer or a hypocrite.

His discomfiting meditations were interrupted by his mother, who had come to talk with him and try to get his mind into other channels. She was afraid that if she did not divert him from this disturbing topic of

thought he might become so involved in his difficulties that his trouble would unbalance his mind. She did not suspect that he was dangerously ill, but she knew that he was not well, that he did not have as much strength as he should, and she understood his nature so well that she knew that this question which he had before his mind was a very serious matter to him.

"Stanly," she said, "don't you want your dinner?"

He started at her voice; he had not noticed her approach. "I suppose so," he replied. "I'm not hungry. Is it dinner time?"

"Yes," she said, "we ate dinner long ago. It is now past four o'clock and if you want something to eat and will come to the house with me I'll get it for you."

"I'm not hungry," he replied, "and it is now so near supper time that I'll just wait till then. I've been looking through the Bible to see what it had to say about belief, and I find that, not only does Jesus say that we can heal the sick if we believe, but He also says in many of the cases where He healed, that it was the belief of the patient that was responsible for his recovery, and I believe that He thought that this was a large factor in all cases. Let me show you some of these accounts and see if you don't agree with me."

He took up his Bible and read over to his mother many of the accounts of healing, which he had already gone over. Then he told her of the conclusions he had drawn from them and wound up by saying: "Now the conclusion is inevitable; Jesus has told us that if we believe in Him and in the power of God, we can do all that He did and even more; that we can do whatever we wish. We are not able to do these things, hence we do not believe. I think, mother, that we have no right to say to other men that we believe in Jesus till we can show the proofs of our belief which He said would be its witness. It seems to me that when we pretend to be followers of Him without being able to show these proofs, 'these signs,' He calls them, we are placing our own judgment above His. He has told us what would be the signs of our belief and for us to seek to prove it by other signs is wrong. Besides that, we are very foolish to think that a profession of belief to men and an assurance to them that we believe will make any difference with Jesus. It looks to me like we have the whole thing backwards and all wrong and I cannot get my bearings in the midst of it all."

"You do seem to have things worked out differently from what other people believe," she said, "and I don't

wonder that you find yourself at sea. One cannot suddenly cut loose from his moorings as you have done, and drift out into an uncharted sea to find a safe anchorage without much searching. You may still have much to go through before you find an end to your puzzle and you will undoubtedly have to grow into a realization of the new truths you may discover even after you have done all that intellect and reason can enable you to do, so you must be patient and be willing to go slowly for awhile. Do not let it bother you any more than necessary, for it will not be tension and strain of mind that will at last decide the matter for you. It will be decided in your quieter, calmer moments. Of course you will have to work over all the ground and see all sides of the question, as nearly as possible, and will be unable to avoid much pain and struggle, but these things are only steps to the real result; that will come with quiet and rest. First, you will have to get yourself broken loose from the old ties, free from the old bonds, and then you will have to build the new props and home for your thoughts, and even when the change seems complete and you are resting on the new foundation, do not deceive yourself with the thought that you have made your final decision, for the pendulum is then only at its farthest outward swing and may

have to swing you back and forth from the old to the new and back again before it comes to rest. You will probably finally come to rest on some middle ground much nearer the old belief than you now think is possible, so do not take your present conclusions too seriously; wait till time proves and experience decides their worth to you."

"Well, but mother, how could it be otherwise than as I have said. See here, and here, and here; in all these cases belief in the power of God and the word of Jesus is said by Jesus Himself to be the cause of the cures He has performed. Then He says all the time that the prayer of faith is what counts and the disciples thought that was what He meant, for they taught the same thing after He was gone. It can't be that all of this ended with them, for He said "whosoever" believed, without any qualification or limit whatever, and in another place, yes, here it is (Matt. 24:35), *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

"He did not limit it to any certain people or time, and it really seems to me, mother, that He does not make the statement as if He were making a promise, or issuing an injunction or command, but rather as if he were telling of what already exists, stating a fact. At any

rate I can see no reason for believing otherwise than that Jesus meant just what He said and that He meant it for all time. It seems to me that this last verse, "*My words shall not pass away*," indicates that He meant that He was speaking for all time. If that is so, then believers can heal today as then, and ability to do the things that He did are the proofs of our faith, and not empty professions of words and acceptance into some man-made organization."

"I see no fault in your reasoning, Stanly," she said, "but you may have overlooked something that would show you where you are all wrong. Don't be in a hurry to decide such a question. Be content to study until you know all that is to be said for both sides before deciding the matter. If you were studying chemistry you would not expect to be able to tell whether a compound was made in the right proportions for producing any certain effect until you were fully acquainted with all the properties of the substances you proposed to use in combination. And you cannot expect to interpret Jesus' words till you are perfectly acquainted with the Bible and the people to whom He spoke and of whom He was One, and even the language and the value of the words that He used.

"Don't you think that you may do wrong to speak

so harshly about your own and other people's religious experiences in the church? They are not usually conscious hypocrites, even if they should be real ones, and they do get a certain satisfaction and comfort out of their professions of faith and their observance of religious rites that is worth their while, and may well be accounted by some of them, at least, to closely approximate some of the signs that Jesus said would follow their belief. Many of them feel that they have been spiritually reborn and their conversion very greatly changes their lives, so they, perhaps, reap part of the reward that is promised to those who believe. You should not be too hard on yourself and others for not believing so fully as did the people in the time of Jesus, for that was a very different time from this, and the people a very different people. These things did not seem so strange to them as they do to us; there were not so many things calculated to make them doubt and to turn their thoughts into other channels. You must remember that this has not been the practice of the church so far as we know, since its founding, and we are not used to considering things in the light in which you are now viewing them."

"Well, but mother, how does all of that affect the truth of these statements and how does that excuse us

for not seeing and following the teaching of Jesus? We cannot be excused by the fact that others have made the same mistakes. The faults of others do not excuse or cure mine. And as to the benefits we receive from our ordinary religious life; all of these experiences might be the results of the thoughts we think; they might be that way just because we have changed our manner of thinking, and acting, and looking at things and, anyway, it doesn't keep many of our best church sisters from being the most pernicious gossips, so it is, obviously, incomplete. I suppose the heathen mother who drowns her babe as a sacrifice to her god gets just about as much religious satisfaction out of that act as we would gain from any religious rite of ours which is equally hard to perform. For that matter, I think that there are few of us who would be equal to such a sacrifice for our faith. And you remember what we read about the Mohammedans who believe in Mohammed instead of Jesus. They seem to have deep religious experiences and get a great deal of happiness from them even to the extent of finding death for their faith pleasant, and you know we were talking when we read that book about how impressive and grand were the characters of some of those old Bedouins. I do not see that we can call the ordinary

fruits of our religion tests of our belief in Jesus; they seem to me rather the natural results of ordinary religious emotion. I can't get away from the fact Jesus says point blank that if we believe we can have whatever we ask for; that we can heal our sick."

"Well, think the matter out for yourself, Stanly. You'll never arrive at a decision in any other way. For the present, though, you had better let it go and come up to the house and eat supper. I'll have it early on your account. You're looking tired and sick and I don't want you to fall ill now, for you want all of your wits about you in the settling of this question."

He arose and went with her, principally in order to still her suspicion that he was not well. As he walked he had to keep his whole attention on his feet in order to keep from staggering, for he found that he was quite weak from his fast and the stress of his emotions. He felt that he would have to go to bed instead of the supper table, if indeed he ever succeeded in getting to the house. The hill had never been so long nor so steep and it seemed to him that they would never get to a place where he could stop and rest without letting his mother see how sick he was; and that he would not do until he had to go to bed for the last time, if he could help it; for he feared that the shock would be all

that she could stand and he wanted to put it off as long as possible.

They had climbed the hill at last and were in the kitchen, where he could drop into a seat and rest his tired limbs and aching chest. He quickly diverted her attention from himself by assuming a cheerfulness he was far from feeling and speaking about how glad he would be to "get at" some of his mother's cooking.

She wondered at his mood, but thought that it was only the reaction from his former condition and tried to think no more of it. She could not keep from noticing, however, that his face was flushed and pale by turns and that a scarlet danger signal blazed in each cheek, and once when she went out for something she returned to find him slumped down in his chair in a very pathetic fashion. As soon as he noticed her return, he tried to straighten up and assume his old air of gaiety, but he only increased her fears by his obvious attempt to hide from her eyes something in his condition.

"What is the matter, Stanly?" she asked. "You look sick; what's the matter? How are you feeling?"

"Oh, I'm just tired and worn out from bothering over something I can't understand," he replied. "I'll be all right when I've had a bite to eat. I guess I

was hungrier than I thought. My head feels light and my face feels hot, as if I were half starved. I feel something like I did the time that John and I got lost in the big woods and didn't have anything to eat till we got to Jamison's place. Do you remember that time? How we ever managed to get lost there and then stay lost, to boot, was more than I could ever figure out."

And he ran on, talking against the coming of the rest of the family, as if his illness were nothing to worry about, just the natural outcome of a day's hard study and the missing of a meal. He succeeded in quieting her fears for the time, and when supper was over quickly made an excuse and went off to bed, and so passed this crisis without giving away his gloomy secret.

He quickly got into his bed, and when his mother looked in after she had cleared away the supper dishes to see how he was feeling and to ask him some more questions about his condition, he was studiously feigning sleep, so she closed the door and went away satisfied that he was all right for the night, although she could not help feeling somewhat uneasy about him because of his troubles of mind and his cough, which seemed growing worse of late.

After she was gone and he knew that there was no more danger of her coming to see him, he abandoned all pretense of sleep and set himself again to the task of settling his doubts about the meaning of Jesus' message. He studied it all over from the beginning again and again, and the more that he thought of it the harder did it seem to find any solution of the problem. When he had grown so weary that he could no longer think clearly and every nerve seemed to be raw and tingling, and his eyes were parched and dry and wide open, and his weak, sick body felt on the point of dissolution; when he had got to the point where he felt that it would be impossible to stand the discomfort and pain of life for another instant, he prayed again.

"Jesus, Lord, help me to believe in You. Help me to read Your word aright and to understand the message that You have given us. Help me to accept and believe in You as You would have us believe. Lord, show me the way."

Far into the night he prayed and finally, still praying for light and help to see his way among the difficulties of his position, he fell asleep and slept till late in the morning, the deep, refreshing sleep of youth.

For many days he puzzled over this question, spending all of his spare hours with his Bible in his hand

and many of the hours that he worked in the fields in deep thought on the same line. He was not able to do much in the fields by this time, but he spent as many hours as possible at light labor in order to give his mind a rest and also in order to keep his family from discovering how sick he really was. He realized almost as fully as his mother the danger of his mind becoming unsettled from worrying over this particular subject; he had happened to read in his medical studies that a large percentage of the patients in the hospitals for the insane lost their reason over religious matters—and he guarded against that danger as well as he could, but he could not keep from thinking of his problem, and he could not set his doubts at rest till he had settled it, no matter what the danger.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AWAKENING OF THE DOCTOR.

The man who asks a vital question starts an investigation.—S. A. W.

ONE DAY he went to town to see his old friend, the doctor. He had not been in to see him many times of late; his mind had been too busy with other things and he hardly knew why he wanted to go then, except that the notion suddenly seized him and he decided that a visit to his friend would get his mind off of his religious troubles. He had never said anything to the doctor about his new views on religious matters, and he did not know whether he had heard it, for the doctor had never mentioned the subject to him, and he was resolved to say nothing about it on this visit. He thought that he would go in and see what cases the doctor was treating now and have his own case examined and see if he could get any idea of how much longer he had to live—he had grown careless as to whether he lived or died—and perhaps he would talk over some of the old lessons in medicine; anything to get a change of thought and a temporary relief from the bondage of this everlasting puzzle.

The doctor opened the door for him. "Hello, Stanly," he said. "Come in. I'm glad to see you. Been thinking about you all day and wondering how you're getting along. Haven't heard of you for several days and was just about decided that I'd have to make some excuse to go out and see you if some one in your neighborhood did not pretty soon oblige me by getting sick and sending for me. That's the queerest thing! Do you know, I was not a bit surprised when I heard your step on the stair? Seemed like I was expecting you, but of course I wasn't. Well, how are you?"

"Oh, I guess I'm all right. Lungs just a little more painful and I feel some weaker, I have more night sweats, and am losing weight, and had another hemorrhage the other day, but otherwise, I guess I'm about the same as ever. Thought I'd drop in and chin you a while and have you to see how much longer I'm going to encumber the grassy side of the soil. What's interesting now? Had any operations lately?" He stopped with a paroxysm of coughing which left him weak.

"No," the doctor replied, "everybody seems to be about the right size these days. I've not done any trimming at all lately, and, in fact, I haven't done

much of anything else, to tell the truth. I have never seen the people so well. Let's see how you are getting along, my boy."

After a thorough examination and some questioning as to what he had been doing and eating and so on, the doctor told Stanly that he was not much worse than he was the last time that he had examined him, but that he looked as if he had been worrying, and that if he did not quit that he would soon bring matters to a crisis which could end in only one way. Then silence fell between them; the doctor seemed to want to say something that he did not know how to begin, and Stanly was trying to keep from telling him about what had been uppermost in his thoughts for so long. At last his desire to talk got the better of him.

"Did you hear how I scandalized the church?" he asked, before he fully realized that he was introducing the very subject of conversation that he had intended to avoid.

"Yes," his friend replied, "I heard a week or so ago, and I was just wanting to talk with you about that, but I did not know just how you felt about it nor how to begin. Tell me what you did; I know only what came to me in a very roundabout way."

The boy gave him a brief sketch of what he had

done on that memorable Sunday when he had tried to be a preacher. "That's what came of my wish to be a preacher," he finished; "I made it impossible for me to ever go back to that church, and got myself into mental hot water that is worse than having consumption."

"Here, here, Stanly," his friend exclaimed, "It's not as bad as that. You've not been among the people since you made your declaration and don't know how they regard it. You just imagine all of that and some of it may not have any foundation in truth. It very likely doesn't make much difference with the others by this time. They've forgotten it or just set it by as the enthusiasm of a boy who was preaching his first sermon. Say no more about it and go back among them just as if nothing had happened and it won't be long till you'll be accepted on the old footing."

"But I don't want to be accepted on the old footing," Stanly replied. "Not if that means that I am supposed to stand for the old beliefs. I am more than ever convinced that I have been wrong and that I am now right, and I cannot honestly go back to them and not proclaim these beliefs. No, the line is irrevocably drawn between my present and my past, in this respect."

"Why do you have to say anything about what you think?" the doctor asked. "It won't be your fault if they think that you agree with them if you don't tell them that you do. I tell you they'll pay no attention at all to your opinions if you'll let the matter drop. If they had been going to do anything about it they would have had you up for trial long ago."

"No, I couldn't do it," Stanly explained. "I may be wrong, but it seems to me that I would be lying to them if I went back and let them accept me without having a distinct understanding as to my beliefs. And I should feel that I was lying to them and to my God every time that I heard them say the things that I used to believe if I did not object to them, but left them to think that I regarded them as they do. No, I couldn't do it."

Silence fell between them. The doctor recognized here the fanatic; for Stanly had come to be nothing less; and he saw that nothing he could say would make any difference in the boy's decision. He waited for him to go on while he tried to think of some line of argument by which he could cool his fanatic ardor and tried to get an idea of the bearing that this new development was likely to have on the state of his young friend's health.

Stanly watched him with burning eyes, looking at that moment almost as if he were already insane. He was not thinking about the doctor nor his opinions, however; he was thinking about his problem. Presently he asked his friend:

"What do you think Jesus meant by, '*Ye shall lay your hands on the sick and they shall recover*'? Do you think that He meant the sick of soul, the people that have sinned according to some standards that are generally acceptable to the leaders of the church, but which, for all we know, may not mean anything at all to Him or God; or do you think that it means just what it says, that if we believe, we shall lay our hands on the sick people around us and heal them?"

"Well, I don't quite know," the doctor replied in a puzzled tone. "You see I'm not much of a Bible student. I guess I'm fairly religious but I never was much of a hand to go to church and read the Bible. I've always been too busy and that part of it seemed a bit unnecessary anyhow. Let's get the Bible and I'll see what I can make of it."

The doctor got up and started to look for a Bible, but he had a hard time finding it. "I thought I had a Bible here," he said. "I'm sure I bought one when I furnished this office." After much rummaging it was

found, a trifle dusty and faded at the edges of the leaves, but all there and showing few signs of wear from use.

"Now let's see what we have here. Where do we find that passage you just asked me about?"

Stanly told him where to find it and they read it over together. Then the doctor said, "That looks like He meant the ordinary sick folks that I have to treat in this day and age, but let's see how He uses it in other places. Let's see whether He uses the word in that meaning without feeling any necessity for explaining what He means by it. If He does, then we can take it for granted that we are right, in that respect at least."

While he was talking, the doctor was turning over the pages. Presently he stopped to read.

"Here's a place where He uses it." And he read in a solemn voice, carefully calling the chapter and verse as he had heard the ministers do when they were reading the morning's "lesson" from the pulpit.

"Matthew eighth chapter, fourteenth verse."

And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

(15) *And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.*

"Well, I guess there is no doubt about what 'sick' means there," he said, when he had read it through. "Let's see if any of the other disciples told about this case, and how they tell it. Where will I find it? You ought to know; you've made this thing a study."

Stanly told him where to look for the next account of this case of healing and when he had found it he read in the same manner:

"Mark, first chapter and thirtieth verse:"

But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

(31) *And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up: and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.*

"That fellow tells it in the same fashion and it evidently means the same thing here. Do you know, Stanly, if I thought that there was any way to heal diseases now as Jesus did, and that it were possible for me to learn how to do it, I would never carry another medical case. That is wonderful, when you think of it; for a man to just come in and take a fever patient by the hand and make her well. But of course, there was no one else able to do what He did and there will never another one, no doubt, but it would be great if it could be learned and done that way now, wouldn't it?"

"It can be done now!" Stanly exclaimed. "You believe in Jesus, don't you? You believe that He told the truth?"

"Yes," his friend replied. "I guess I believe in Him. Why, why of course I believe in Jesus Christ, and God, and the Bible and all of that. Such a question to ask a Christian!"

"Well," Stanly hastened to continue, "if you believe Jesus' word you will have to believe that healing can be done today as well as in His time and that we can, by believing in Him and in the power of God, do all that He did, and, He says, *even greater things*. Here, look in the fourteenth chapter of John—but no, let's find that other place where it tells about Simon's mother-in-law and then look up some of the other cases and when we have settled whether 'sick' means sick or something else, I'll show you what makes me think that we should be able to heal the sick, and what got me into all this trouble. Turn to the fourth chapter of Luke and I think you'll find there another account of this fever case."

"So you still think that we should be able to heal the sick by the laying on of hands and the prayer of faith and such things as that, do you? I'll be glad

to see how you make it out," the doctor replied. "But first let's finish what we're about and then there'll be time enough for that."

The doctor was getting worried about his patient by this time. He saw that the boy was on the borderland of insanity and he was afraid that he would unbalance his mind with worrying over what seemed to him a question incapable of solution. He hoped to be able to gradually lead his thoughts away from the question and had no intention whatever of suffering him to go over any argument about the healing of the sick by the laying on of hands.

"Where did you say?" he asked in a preoccupied tone. He had been looking for the place named, hardly conscious of what he was doing, his mind very much occupied with his thoughts about his sick friend. "Yes, here it is. Listen to this, Luke, fourth chapter and thirty-eighth verse:"

And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

(39) *And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose, and ministered unto them.*

"Well, he tells it a little bit different from the others, but there is no doubt about his thinking that the old lady had an ordinary fever. There is no question that he thought she had some fever of the soul, or morals, or something of that sort. I should say that 'sick' means there just what it ordinarily means when we use it, and that it would have to be qualified in order to mean anything else.

"But say," he continued when he saw that Stanly was starting to take up the other subject, "do you know this is a wonderful case of healing? Let's see some of these other cases. I remember that He did other healing, but it has been so long since I've read any in the Bible that I've about forgotten about the different cases. Where'll I find some more of it?"

"O, it's all the way through Matthew and Mark and Luke and a good deal is to be found in John. Suppose you take Matthew first and then you can look up duplicate accounts in the other gospels as you go along."

Following this suggestion the doctor started turning through the gospel of Matthew and presently said,

"Here is the first place I find: Matthew, fourth chapter and twenty-third verse:"

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their

synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people.

(24) *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.*

"It seems from this that about the first thing that Jesus did when He started out was to begin healing the sick. And He doesn't seem to pick His cases, either. He's no specialist, that's certain. I guess that was before the days of specialists.

"Then the next chapters are all taken up with the sermon on the mountain, which is very well in its way, all right, but which we're not interested in just at the present time, and we find no more cases of healing till we get way over here in the eighth chapter. Here it is: Matthew, eighth chapter and second verse:"

And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

(3) *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

"There's faith for you, if that's what you want!" the reader exclaimed. "Where will we find the next account of that, in Mark?" And without waiting for an answer he turned to the gospel of Mark, keeping his place in Matthew with his finger. Presently he found a passage that caught his attention. He stopped and read, then he cleared his throat and read aloud,

"Mark, first chapter and twenty-third verse:"

And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

(24) *Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*

(25) *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.*

(26) *And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.*

"Well, that was a queer one," the doctor said. "I've not had much experience with lunatics, but what I have had leads me to believe that we've changed our ideas about the nature of the trouble considerably, since Jesus' time. Perhaps, though, if we were as He was, we would find the same sort of response from

the insane. Who can tell? There may be more in this than appears on the surface. Do you know, I believe that there is more in some of the things that modern science laughs at than most of us are willing to admit. Let's see if it tells anything more about this in Luke."

CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS, THE HEALER.

"And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all."—
(Matt. 12:15.)

WHILE THE DOCTOR was searching in the gospel of Luke for the account of this case, Stanly got up and came and looked over his shoulder. Then he showed the doctor how he could find the duplicates of the incidents in which he was interested, by referring to the notations in the center of the page.

Following the instructions which Stanly had given him, the doctor had no difficulty in finding what he was looking for.

"Here it is; Luke, fourth chapter and thirty-third verse," he announced:

And in the synagogue there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

(34) *Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.*

(35) *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.*

"Yes there it is; the same thing. Remarkable, isn't it? Now let's find that leper story."

He turned back to the first chapter of Mark and started to read again. He soon found something else that interested him.

"Here is another place where it tells of His healing all sorts of diseases; Mark, first chapter and thirty-second verse."

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

(33) *And all the city was gathered together at the door.*

(34) *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.*

"There's another place where the devils, or whatever it is about the lunatics that they call devils, seem to know Him. Here's another verse, Mark, first chapter and thirty-ninth verse."

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

"And here in the next verse is the leper story we're hunting."

(40) *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

(41) *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

(42) *And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.*

"Now let's see what Luke has to say about it. Here it is, Luke, fifth chapter and twelfth verse."

And it came to pass when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy, who seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

(13) *And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.*

"Well, they're all agreed on that all right, let's see what comes next in Matthew."

The doctor was talking against time. Every time that he noticed that Stanly was about to speak he managed to cut in with some remark that would stop him.

He kept up a running fire of remarks while he was hunting the different references, in order to keep the boy from talking. He wanted to have time to think before he let the lad have a chance to raise the question of man's power to heal in these days as Jesus did, and he wanted more than that, to keep him off that subject altogether. He was watching his companion and he did not like the fire in his eyes and the flush on his cheeks. These were signs of mental and physical conditions which he did not like to see in combination and he was growing very fearful for the boy's health in more ways than one.

He quickly found another verse and read it aloud with an appearance of interest that he did not quite feel.

"Here's another verse that tells of many cures being performed. Matthew, eighth chapter and sixteenth verse," he read:

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

"Say, I wonder how many cases Jesus healed while He was on earth. I guess there is no way of knowing, but I should imagine that their number must have run

into the thousands. He evidently made that a very large part of His work. It seems strange to me that the churches should have dropped that out of their rituals if it is as you say and the Bible gives us reason to think that the power to heal persisted after Jesus had gone."

He was sorry of it as soon as he had spoken, for Stanly's eyes grew even brighter and he began talking, excitedly, before the doctor could say anything to check him.

"It is true!" he exclaimed. "If anything in the Bible is plain, that is plain and if any of the Bible is true, that is true also. It is true. Why—"

"Well, well, we'll take that up when we come to it," the doctor interrupted. "For the present, let's see what Jesus did in the way of healing. This is about the most interesting thing I've read in a long time. It's most remarkable and I wonder that I've not noticed it before. Of course, I knew that these things were here, but I just paid no attention to them till I had almost forgotten them. Then somehow, I never thought of them as straight cases of healing before. They always seemed to be in a class by themselves in some way, and I never thought of them from the viewpoint of the physician. I had them classed with all miracles

and they lost for me their value as cases of physical and mental sickness and healing."

The doctor had been talking steadily while he searched for another verse worthy of note and when he had found it he read it aloud before Stanly could get a chance to say anything.

"Matthew, eighth chapter and twenty-eighth verse," he read, in sonorous tones.

And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

(29) *And, behold, they cried out saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

(30) *And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.*

(31) *So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.*

(32) *And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.*

"Remarkable," he exclaimed, "remarkable! That

would seem that there was something that was really driven out of the man which could be transferred to the hogs. That was no matter of setting right some disordered faculties, if the account of the occurrence is correct. Let's see what the other writers have to say about that. Here, where is that reference number? Yes, here it is; Mark 5:1. Now we'll see what he has to say about the matter. Here we are. Mark, fifth chapter and first verse:"

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

(2) *And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.*

(3) *Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:*

(4) *Because that he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.*

(5) *And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.*

(6) *But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,*

(7) *And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.*

(8) *For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.*

(9) *And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.*

(10) *And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.*

(11) *Now there was there nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding.*

(12) *And all the devils besought him, saying, send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.*

(13) *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand); and were choked in the sea.*

“Well, that is almost past belief,” he said, when he had finished reading. “Of course, one has to believe it because it is in the Bible, but if I had read it in anything else, I should call it a very remarkable and amusing story. Here we have Jesus talking with the

devils and making them come and go at His command and then we have the devils infesting the hogs and making them crazy, and the strangest thing about the whole story is that there should be such things as these evil spirits or devils. I wonder what would happen if one of our ordinary insane were to meet up with Jesus. Do you suppose that insanity has changed since that day and that it is now a case of unbalanced mind when it was then a case of obsession by evil spirits, or was it at all times as it seems to be now? It may even be possible that some of it is now due to these same evil spirits, whatever they may be. Who can tell?"

He was not talking to Stanly but rather to himself. He was now thoroughly interested in what he had read and, forgetting all about his companion and his wish to prevent him from having a chance to talk, he read the last of these accounts over again and then turned to compare it with the first. When he looked up to give expression to his thoughts Stanly cut in quickly, "It does not matter whether they are devils or spirits or what they are, we can overcome them and cast them out as Jesus did if we believe! The trouble is—"

"Yes, yes, that's all right," the doctor interrupted him, "we are coming to that. Let's take up and finish one thing at a time. After we've found out what Jesus

could do it will be plenty of time to take up the question of what we can do.

"Here's one thing that puzzles me about this story of the devils: how did they know who Jesus was and what difference there was between Him and other men? Other people did not, but the devils always seem to know Him without being told. I'd like to understand that. It would seem that they were in some degree supernatural or that they really had extraordinary powers. The fact that they could tell this without being told, fits in pretty well with the theory that they were spirits, or devils, or something of that nature, or at any rate, extra-mundane.

"That is a very remarkable story when you stop and consider it from all sides.

"Well, let's see what else we can find here," he continued, turning back to Matthew, to the place that he had kept marked with his finger.

He soon found the account of the healing of the man who had palsy, which he discussed and compared with the other accounts of the same case and then he came to the one which tells of the raising of the ruler's dead daughter.

"Here, listen to this," he said, "Matthew, ninth chapter and eighteenth verse."

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

"And then, here in the twenty-third verse of the same chapter."

And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

(24) *He said unto them, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.*

(25) *But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.*

"Well, that's a pretty good one," he exclaimed, and then he went on and hunted up and compared this with the other accounts in Mark 5:22 and Luke 8:41.

"How sublime must have been Jesus' faith in Himself," he exclaimed. "Just think what nerve that was to go to a dead woman and tell her to get up, as if she had been no more than what He told the others she was, asleep. That's what I call confidence in oneself!"

"Yes," Stanly said, "if we had faith like that now, I believe that we could do the same things now that He did then. You see the trouble with us is—"

"I know, I know," the doctor again interrupted him, "we'll come to that presently. There's no hurry. You rest and don't try to talk till I have gone through this question and found out how much healing Jesus did. Let's see, where are we? O, yes. There's that case of the woman who was cured of the issue of blood by touching His garment, which we had to skip because it came in the middle of the dead girl story. That was a wonderful thing, wasn't it?" And he read it over again, comparing it with all the other accounts of the same occurrence.

"I wonder what He meant by feeling virtue going out of Him," he continued, when he had finished reading this account. "That would seem as if there were some actual force employed in effecting His cures, and as if the patient were responsible for its outflow, or at least that it was so in this one case. That's all very strange, and I wonder why, in these days when so many of the men of science and medicine are Christians, who must believe that this account is true and at the same time, being scientists, realize that everything, even the miracles, are the results of the actions of natural laws; why they have not, some of them, made these stories the basis of a real investigation of this sort of healing. They might learn something that

would enable them to determine whether this force is peculiar to only a few people, as, for instance, Jesus and His disciples, or whether it can be cultivated by all men, or at least a few of them, if they know how to go about it. This reads like a straightforward account of an actual occurrence, and it appears to me worthy of investigation. There is no telling what forces lie hidden from us within our power to use if we only knew their laws."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASTER PHYSICIAN'S RECORD.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.—(Matt. 9:35.)

FOR SOME TIME Stanly had been trying to interrupt the doctor to tell him that belief is all that is necessary, according to the words of Jesus, but his friend knew what he wanted too well to stop talking, and he talked on till Stanly had given it up, and then he turned to the Bible and began hunting for another account of healing.

"Here's another one," he said, "Matthew, ninth chapter and thirty-second verse:"

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

(33) *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.*

"And here's another account of the same case, Luke, eleventh chapter and fourteenth verse:"

And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake, and the people wondered.

"There's another case of a devil. They certainly did believe in the 'devil theory' of insanity. I surely would like to know how many cases of various kinds Jesus healed while on earth. Here in the thirty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter of Matthew it says:"

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

He then read over to the twelfth chapter, where he found another case of healing.

"Matthew, twelfth chapter and tenth verse," he read:

And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? that they might accuse him.

(11) *Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

"Here are the duplicates of this account," he said presently, "Mark, third chapter and first verse."

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

“And then, here in the fifth verse it tells how he was healed:”

He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out and his hand was restored the other.

“The part that I didn’t read tells about how the priests watched to see if Jesus would cure this man on Sunday so that they could put Him in jail and stop Him from doing anything more in this line. I was just thinking when I read that, that if He was on earth today He’d have about as hard a time with us doctors as He had in those days with the priests. I wonder why the doctors of that day did not jump onto Him. It seems very wicked to me now for the priests to have hampered and hindered Him as they did, but I guess that if He were to come to earth now, I’d be about as eager as the rest of them to stop Him from doing anything new or anything that was contrary to my beliefs of what is possible and right.

“But that isn’t finding these references. Here’s the other one, Luke, sixth chapter and sixth verse.”

And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught; and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

“Those old fellows certainly must have had good

memories to tell these stories in the same way, and almost in the same words. I'll bet there are not three men today who could witness any certain occurrence and then at a later date report it as nearly alike as Matthew, Mark and Luke report what Jesus did and said. Luke, too, tells about how the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, just as Mark and Matthew did, and then in the tenth verse he finishes the story in almost the same words. He says: *And looking round about them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

"Here's yet another place where it tells of His healing all the sick in a whole crowd of people. Matthew, twelfth chapter and fifteenth verse:"

But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all.

"I never had any idea that there were so many accounts of healing in the Bible. Let's make a list of the cases as I find them. I'll read them off and you can make notes of them as I go along and then when we're through we'll discuss the whole lot together. I may not get all of them, I'll not try to; that would take too long; but I'll get enough of them to give us a pretty

good idea of what He did in this line. I think I shall always think of Him hereafter, anyhow, as a healer rather than in any other capacity.

"Make a note of this," he continued. "Matthew twelfth chapter and twenty-second verse:"

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb spake and saw.

"Here's another place where He heals them by wholesale, Matthew, fourteenth chapter and fourteenth verse:"

And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

"Now here's another of the same kind. Matthew, fifteenth chapter and thirtieth verse:"

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.

"And here in the nineteenth chapter and the second verse of the same gospel:"

And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

"Here's a case of a blind man. Matthew, twentieth chapter and thirtieth verse:"

And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.

“And then skip to the thirty-fourth verse, where it says:”

So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

“Here’s another case of blindness. Make a note of this:”

(Matt. 21:14) *And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.*

“That’s enough for Matthew; let’s turn to Mark and see if there are any cases there which were not recorded in Matthew.

“Here’s one; Mark, eighth chapter and twenty-second verse:”

And he cometh to Bethsaida: and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

(23) *And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.*

(24) *And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.*

(25) *After that he put his hand again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.*

After reading silently for awhile, the doctor said, "I guess that is all in Mark that we have not already read, except for a few places here where it mentions His healing a large number, and I suspect that most of these are duplicates of like accounts in Matthew. You might make a note of them, though, for the sake of the way some of them are told. First take this one; Mark, third chapter and tenth verse:"

For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

"And then this one, Mark, sixth chapter and fifty-fifth verse:"

And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

(56) *And whithersoever he entered; into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.*

"We'll just let the rest of those go and go on to Luke. Luke, seventh chapter and twelfth verse:"

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

(13) *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

(14) *And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*

(15) *And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

"Luke, eighth chapter and second verse." Stanly smiled at his manner of announcing the chapter and verse. It reminded him of prayer meeting when the attendance was scant and the reader, through force of habit, conducted the services as ceremoniously as if the greater part of his audience did not consist of empty benches.

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

"There was a woman who was well provided with devils!" the doctor exclaimed. "I wonder just what

was the source of this idea of theirs that insane people were possessed of devils. I wonder if it was anything more than their lack of understanding of the case. It might be that they understood them better than we do. I'd hate to be called upon to prove that they didn't.

"Well, here's another one," he continued. "Luke, thirteenth chapter and eleventh verse."

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

(12) *And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

(13) *And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.*

"Wonderful!" the doctor exclaimed. "I had thought that I was past wonder by this time, but that is too much not to excite some emotion even in one who has been thinking of nothing else for hours. Just think what that must have meant to that woman. No wonder that the Christian religion grew by the leaps and bounds in the days of Jesus. If there had been some person in every age who could do these things, it would have swept every other religion off the earth long ago."

"It could have been done," Stanly hastened to as-

sure him. "There could have been some one, and not only some one but many, in every age, who could have done the same things if they had only believed. Why, just see here——"

"I've no doubt of it," the doctor interrupted, "but for the present you are to listen and make notes. Your time to talk will come later. Here, take this one. Luke, fourteenth chapter and second verse:"

And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

(4) *And they held their peace. And he took him and healed him, and let him go:*

"That seems to be about all of them except those which tell of general work done, and I suspect they are duplicates of those we have already seen. No, wait a minute! Here, in the very moment of His betrayal, He performs another miraculous cure. Take this, Luke, twenty-second chapter and forty-ninth verse:"

When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

(50) *And one of them smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.*

(51) *And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

"Isn't that typical of the man?" the delighted old man exclaimed. "Who but Jesus would have rendered such a service to one of His enemies at such a time? I guess this is about His last case of healing, and that for the benefit of an enemy. That is certainly a fitting close to a life that had been so freely given in service to people who were nothing to Him in the ordinary way of thinking. Sublime!

"Well, I guess that is all of Luke except those general cases. But here is one that is worthy of note.

"Luke, seventeenth chapter and twelfth verse:"

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers which stood afar off:

(13) *And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*

(14) *And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.*

"Then, here are two more typical accounts.

"Luke, sixth chapter and nineteenth verse:"

And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

"Luke, seventh chapter and twenty-first verse:"

And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

"Now, let's see what we can find in John."

He read in silence for a while, at times turning the pages rapidly and again lingering on a single page as if he found there something that interested him.

"This writer does not pay so much attention to recording cases of healing. He appears to be more interested in the religious and metaphysical side of Jesus' teachings and works. Here is one place in the fifth chapter that I think we have not found elsewhere.

"John, fifth chapter and fifth verse:"

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

(6) *When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*

(7) *The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*

(8) *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*

(9) *And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked, and on the same day was the Sabbath.*

"They are scarce in this book," he said, after another long wait, while he read to himself and turned over the pages. "Here's one, though.

"John, ninth chapter and first verse:"

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

(6) *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.*

(7) *And he said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came, seeing.*

"Well, that's a great cure for sore eyes. I wonder what would happen if I should spit on some dirt and offer to put it on Sam Rich's eyes. I'll bet that old codger would heat up the air for a bit." And, amused at this conceit, the doctor lay back in his chair and laughed till Stanly joined in.

"Well, I guess I'll not try any of the prescriptions I find in here, for I'm afraid some of them would be laughed at, and others would make my patients mad, and I couldn't make them feel any better about it if I told them that Jesus was the first to compound them. Funny about people, isn't it?

"Well, here's another one, and I guess we'll let it go

with this; there can't be many more, and I think we have enough to give us a good idea of what sort of a healer Jesus was.

"John, eleventh chapter and first verse:"

Now, a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

"Now take the fourteenth verse; we'll have to skip around a good deal to get this story unless we want to copy this whole chapter."

Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

"Now we skip to the seventeenth verse:"

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

"Then take this, the forty-third verse:"

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

(44) And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

"Well, that is all we'll bother with, but I suppose it lacks a lot of being all that we could have found if we had gone over the gospels more carefully. Even as we have made it out, it is a wonderful record. What a record! I shall never think of Jesus again as any-

thing but a great healer. It makes me feel like I had been a dabbler all my life to see what this sublime man did among that simple people and in an age when science was unknown. But, of course, He could never have done a tithe of these things if He had not been the Son of God and the Christ. It is hardly correct, no, it is not correct at all, to speak of Him as a man. He was without doubt a God. No man could have done as much."

"But He has said that all men could do as much if they but believed," Stanly exclaimed. "He has said that whoever believes in Him can do all of the things that He did and even greater things; if there are any greater things to do. He did not teach that He owed His power to some divine relation that was peculiar to Him alone, but He taught that all men could be as He was. I do not understand fully what is necessary in order that a man may become in all ways like Him, if that is possible at all, but I can easily see what He says is necessary for a man to become a healer like Him. Here, let me show you what He says."

Stanly turned to get the Bible, taking some papers out of his coat pocket, papers all covered over with notes; and the doctor saw that there was no way of shunting him off from his subject any longer, so he accepted the inevitable and let him go ahead.

“All right, my boy. Go ahead and say what you have been trying to all afternoon. I’ll see what I can make out of it. Perhaps you can teach me how to heal some of the old chronics that take up all the room around the stove over at the store.”

CHAPTER X.

JESUS' POWER ETERNAL.

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—(Matt. 28:20.)

STANLY was too deeply absorbed in thinking about his idea to see that the doctor was laughing at him. His whole thought was taken up with the arguments that he was preparing to present to his friend in support of his belief in his idea. With the Bible on his lap and his notes spread out on the table by his side, he was soon ready to unfold the arguments which would prove to the doctor that men could heal as they did in the days of Jesus, even as He did, if they would but believe.

“I wish I had my own Bible,” he said, “for I have all the places marked in it, but I think I shall, perhaps, be able to find what I want in this one.”

And then he went over the ground that he had been over so many times by himself and with his mother, showing how Jesus had said that whoever had faith could do all that He did. He then brought forward the proofs that Jesus' disciples understood the Master's teaching as he did, since they had practiced healing and

had told others to do the same thing after Jesus had gone from among them. He went over the whole familiar ground, while the doctor sat back with eyes half shut and hands in front of him, finger to finger, sometimes listening and sometimes studying the speaker.

The old man found the young one an interesting subject of study. "Here," he thought, "is the true religious enthusiast; he is almost a fanatic. If there is anything in what he is saying and belief in Jesus and the Power of God and the Divine Birthright of Man have any of the virtue that he thinks they have, he should certainly be the one to prove it, for he surely does believe. And his arguments sound plausible enough. It may be possible that there is something in it all. I wonder how it will turn out for him. Ordinarily, I should say that there is not one chance in a thousand that he will get well, and that there are a good many chances in a thousand that he will become insane—hum! I came very near to saying that he will be possessed of devils! I'll have to watch myself or I'll be diagnosing diseases in the terms and according to the ideas credited to Jesus. Wouldn't some of my patients think I was ready for the asylum if they heard me say that they had a withered arm, or that they were

possessed of devils? Some of them would want to make me the subject of one of those church trials that they delight in. Well, I'll be out of this atmosphere quickly enough by the time I sit around the stove over at the store a little while, so I guess there's no danger of my making any such mistake unless it is in talking with Stanly, and he's too busy with his own thoughts to pay any attention to what I say. I wish I could do something for him. Wonder how it'll all come out? There's nothing I can do and I guess it will be about as well to let him talk himself out now; perhaps it will relieve some of the pressure and I may be able to say something that will cool him off a bit; that is, if he doesn't convert me to his way of thinking. He surely is an enthusiast."

While he was following his own trains of thought, the doctor was at the same time keeping pretty close track of what Stanly was saying, and when his young friend had finished and asked him what he thought of it, he was able to reply.

"Well, I don't quite know," he said. "You seem to have the matter pretty well thought out and I see no way to go behind it if we accept the Bible as authority, but I still don't see how it can be done. It is too different from my usual conceptions for me to accept it all

at once, but when I can get them out of the way and think wholly of what you have said and the arguments for and against it from the standpoint of the Bible, I do not see how it could be otherwise than as you think that it is. Are you sure that there is not something in the Bible that explains all of these things as they are generally understood? You must have missed something."

"Oh, there are things in the Bible that will explain all right for the man who is hunting an explanation that will enable him to satisfy an uneasy conscience. But those are the passages which are so indefinite, and general, and hard to understand that no one ever pretends to try to explain them till they are needed to explain something else or to prove something that some person is very anxious to demonstrate. Those verses are used by people to satisfy themselves that they are what they pretend to be; but they do not explain; they merely enable hypocrites to deceive even themselves and stop the criticism of others who see what they are doing."

"Now see here, my boy," the doctor exclaimed, when Stanly had finished this impassioned speech, "you don't want to get to saying hard things about other folks, for this will soon lead to your becoming just a kicker and keep you from anything reasonable and con-

structive. Those are pretty hard things that you say about——”

“I’m not saying these things about other people, particularly!” Stanly interrupted him. “I’m saying these things as much about myself and what I used to believe as I am about other folks now. It is none of my business what any other person believes; it does not matter to me what you or any other person thinks, and I have no right to make odious comparisons and condemn anyone but myself. I realize this as well as you do, perhaps, and I am not doing that now. I’m only arraigning the objections to my idea; telling how these statements are made to mean anything else than they mean to me, now. I used to be just as blind as anyone where these things are concerned, and I am now as blind as the worst of them in many respects, no doubt; and when I speak harshly of the other side of the question it is as much in shame for my past conduct, as in protest against the assertions of those who oppose my understanding of Jesus and his message. Don’t you fear that I am becoming bitter or anything like that. You know that my mother’s training will protect me against anything of the sort. It is enough, though, to make anyone bitter to think how we have gone on year after year lying to ourselves and everyone

else about the things that we have always counted most sacred; to think that we have been deceiving ourselves into thinking that we believed in Jesus when we only believed in our belief, and thinking that we were being made happy and comforted by His acceptance of our belief, when we have just been satisfied that our neighbors acknowledged our pretensions. It surely is enough to make anyone bitter."

"But, Stanly, you seem to be taking for granted that you are without doubt right, when you may be now even more mistaken than you used to be. How do you know but what you are the one who is wrong and not the other folks who disagree with you?"

"Why, look at the evidence, doctor! How can it be otherwise? There it is in plain words, without any qualification, without any conditions or provisions or alternatives (Mark 11:23): *Whosoever * * * shall not doubt * * * shall have whatever he saith*, and (John 14:12), *He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do*. Belief is the only condition. I do not see how there is any getting around that unless we lay it to Jesus' carelessness and a tendency to exaggeration in a moment of enthusiasm, and I guess there are few of those who object to my literal inter-

pretation of these words, who would be willing to defend their position on any such grounds."

"No," answered the doctor, "I can imagine that very few of the Old Faithfuls would be willing to advance any such sacrilegious argument as that, or even to listen to some one else make it, for that matter, but I cannot see that that is much worse than saying that Jesus meant something else by what He said. It is just a matter in the one case of saying that He did not mean what He said and in the other, of saying that He meant something else; in other words, that He meant one thing and said another.

"I'm like you so far as thinking that these things taken by themselves can mean nothing else than what they say, but it seems to me that you may find something else that will show you that we have no right to read these statements in this way. Does the Bible say anything else about man's powers that agrees with what you have read to me?"

"Yes, I think it does," Stanly replied.

"Wait a moment. Yes, here, how's this?"

(Phil. 4:13) *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

"And this; how does this agree with our past practices in the church? (II Tim. 3:5) *Having a form of*

godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.

“And this; how does this agree with what I have said about Jesus’ promises? Does this mean that Peter thought that they could not be depended upon, and that they were limited to just a few, or does it mean what it does to me, that he thought they were to be trusted and were for all men who had knowledge of Jesus and faith in Him? Here’s what he says (2 Peter 1:3): *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

(4) *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

“Notice that, *that by these (promises) ye might be partakers of the divine nature.* Not only do we have power to do all that Jesus did, but we can also partake of the divine nature through these promises and, so far as I can see, belief is all that is required in order to receive the benefits they promise us. If we partake of the divine nature, how is it strange that we shall have power over all of the things of the flesh, and evil, and

all sickness and other low and undesirable and impure things? I do not see how we could partake of the divine nature and escape having power over all the lower order of things of earth.

“And here, how is this? Many people will condemn me for even trying to find out any other meaning of the scriptures than that they accept, because it is the fashion to accept that particular interpretation. I did not try to find any new meaning; it just found itself and forced itself upon me, and left me no choice but to accept it; but if I had desired to read it with the idea of trying to understand it for myself, here is plenty of excuse for my doing so. Listen:”

(Luke 11:9) *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

(10) *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

“Now that is to me a command to try to find out what is meant by what He says, not to sit up with open ears and listen and take in and accept as truth, no matter how absurd or otherwise, what some one else says about the matter. Of course, there are some who will say that Jesus wants people to seek for only certain

things, conversion to a church creed, for instance; or peace of soul that may have nothing to do with their souls for all they know, and that it does not mean that each one shall seek for the meaning of these things for himself and that he shall accept only what seems to him right. They will say that that would make all sorts of confusion and turmoil and that there could be no organizations and churches, and that one man would not know what another believed, for all men would have different ideas about things, on account of their being made different and having different ideas to start from.

“And they would be partly right. People would all have different ideas, but what of that? Their ideas would be no more different than they are, and if it is right for all people to be the same so far as their ideas are concerned, why is it not right for them to be the same in other respects? I do not see that we have any right to say that what God has made so differently in every other way should be twisted, and dwarfed, and moulded to fit one set of ideas.

“I do not see that there would be such a very disastrous disagreement about those things concerning which one can have exact knowledge. I find that most people, in spite of the fact that they are so very different and tend to develop such various ideas about the unseen

things of life, agree pretty well respecting those things that can be proven.

“For instance; they all agree that lead is heavier than feathers and that day is light and night dark, and that the sun shines and that men are grown-up babies, and so on; and if they disagree about the other things after studying them, it seems to me that it is rather an indication that none of them are right, than otherwise.

“I believe that there is something in every nature that instinctively knows truth. I don’t know how to express it nor just exactly what I mean, perhaps, but I think there is a sort of response from the deeper nature to the perception of truth that lets us know when we have found it, if we but know how to and would always heed this indication. I have thought that this might be the truth of ourselves responding to the truth of our experiences or knowledge.

“I can’t find words to tell you just what I mean, but maybe you’ll be able to see my idea. At any rate it has led me to this conclusion, granting that I am right; every truth unmixed with error is a self-evident truth. I mean by that, as nearly as I can tell you, that if I should tell you something that was wholly true and not part true and part untrue, you would not question it, but it would appear to you self-evident. In other words,

the truth of your nature or whatever this quality may be that perceives truth, would respond. On the other hand, if I told you something that was only part true and part untrue, a mixed truth and error, then there would be no responsiveness on your part and you would demand proofs and reasons.

"Now where was I? Oh, yes! I was talking about whether it is right for us to look for new meanings in the scriptures. I think that here is a verse that commands us to seek everywhere for new things. Paul says (Thes. 5:21), *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

"This says nothing about appointing anyone to do the proving for us, and it does not say anything about accepting things because some self-appointed teacher tells us to, neither does it say that we shall have some one to tell us what has been proven good. I think that Paul understands that individual experience is the only thing that can prove that. This is to me a command to make an effort to find out for myself what is good and to avoid letting myself be directed by teachings which may be either false or true. He has the good sense to see that I would not know whether it were true or false, good or bad, except by the response of my own deeper nature."

The doctor was smiling now. "Well, you seem to have it all pretty well figured out, all right," he said. "I did not realize that you were such a philosopher. Keep on and pretty soon you'll be starting a new religion, or writing a book or something. It looks to me like you are making a pretty strong case of it. Is that all along that line?"

"No, that is not all, and I do not see why you think it is so funny," Stanly expostulated. "I suppose I do seem rather ridiculous to you, but I don't feel it, I assure you. I'll bet you wouldn't find it very amusing if you were told that you had only a short time to live and then suddenly lost your grip on all that you had counted most stable and were put where you did not know what to look for in the hereafter. Religious matters become very important when one thinks he can see into his own grave. I never have had an idea take control of me like this before. I seem to have no power to think of anything else. Sometimes I am afraid that I am on the verge of insanity."

"No, no, there's no danger of that," the doctor hastened to assure him. "You have just become greatly interested in the subject, and on account of the fact that you are fearful for your health, it has an unusual fascination for you. As soon as you have definitely settled

the matter it will lose some of its power to interest you."

Stanly did not reply, and they sat silent while he hunted for another of the verses which he wished to bring forward in support of his idea. Presently he found one and, looking up, said:

"Here's a verse in Corinthians which indicates that God wants us to do things, not talk about what we believe. (I Cor. 4:20) *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* I don't know what that means to you, but to me it means that when we get the rewards of belief and trust in God it will be in the form of power to do things, the things He told us to do, and that it will not show itself in the form of words and professions. To me this means that whenever we have come into the kingdom of God, whenever we have learned to truly believe in Jesus and God, it will be entirely unnecessary for us to make testimony of the fact. We will show it in the things we do; in other words, the signs of which Jesus spoke, will follow us.

"Here's what Jesus told the man who brought his dumb son to be healed (Mark 9:23): *All things are possible to him that believeth*, and in that case it was only the father's belief that was concerned. Why should I think it strange that we might be able to claim these promises for ourselves in this day, in view of all of

the statements that I have shown you where He makes no limit of time and person, and also in view of His assurance that (Matt. 24:35) *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*, and (Matt. 28:18) *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*.

(19) *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

(20) *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

“It seems to me that there can be no other way of looking at it. He says that whoever believes can do all that He did and then He says that His word endures forever and that He will be with us to the end of time; how can we think otherwise than that we can heal the sick and do the other things that He did, if we believe in Him?”

CHAPTER XI.

THE DECISION.

A difficult problem is half solved, when one has reached the point of Decision.

HE HAD FINISHED his argument, and now he sat back and waited for the doctor's opinion, watching him with feverish eyes.

The doctor did not speak for several minutes. He looked at the boy and then pursed up his lips, knitted his brows in thought, placed the tips of his fingers together as was his habit when perplexed, and at last he spoke.

"Well, Stanly, I have listened as best I could while some other things are on my mind, and I see no way to get out of admitting that you have a very strong case in the affirmative for the proposition that men can today do the things that Jesus did if they believe the Bible and it is true. I'm no Bible student, but I understand English fairly well, and I do not see why a person would need more than that to see that Jesus evidently means that men should include healing among the things that they should do in following His teachings. Yes, you undoubtedly have a strong case, but I am

not the man to whom it should be brought for a decision; you should take it to a preacher, who makes that sort of thing——”

“I didn’t come to you to decide it,” Stanly exclaimed. “I don’t want anybody to decide it for me. I’ll have to do that for myself. And least of all would I go to a preacher for an opinion on this question. He would meet me with the old stock of sophistries, and when I did not accept them as gospel truth, he would preach to me and I’d very likely get mad and insult him, or at least make him mad because I would question his pretension to speak with absolute authority. No, I’ll not go to anyone else for a decision. I have already decided for myself and I only wanted to talk it out with you, and then, of course, I wanted to see what you would think about it.”

“Well, I think that it admits of little argument, as you have presented it to me, taking for granted that the Bible is true and Jesus’ statements are reliable. As to that, I have never thought to question it. I’ve always just believed it because my parents told me to, and my wife and family always agreed with what my parents taught me. I cannot doubt it now and yet I cannot heal the sick without the use of my medicines, and I would hate to be under the necessity of taking up ser-

pents and drinking poisons, and I don't believe that I can show any of the other signs you talk about. But I suppose I lack faith or something, so that doesn't disturb your conclusions, and if you have decided it—"

"I have decided!" Stanly again interrupted him, eagerly. "I have decided and I feel as if a load had been lifted off my shoulders! I feel like a new man!"

And he looked it. The doctor caught a new tone in the boy's voice and looked up to find his eyes bright with a very different sort of light; the old lines of stress and mental turmoil were all gone, and his whole frame seemed to have undergone some sort of metamorphosis. He was at a loss to understand what had taken place. He could not understand at first what had happened, and then he soon decided that the change in the boy's appearance was the result of his changed attitude of mind. Where he had been all tensed and strained with trying to decide between the different questions raised in his mind; where he had been torn by doubts, and hopes and fears, he was now at rest, his mind made up, all conflict gone and nothing but confident assurance remaining. The doctor saw that he had truly decided, that his mental crisis was past and he welcomed the change with a sigh of relief.

"I wonder if this is to be a miracle," he thought.

"He certainly is changed in appearance, and he has faith enough in what he has been telling me to do anything that faith can do. I shouldn't be surprised——"

The doctor was still under the spell of Stanly's arguments, his belief and his talk and he would, perhaps, not have been surprised at anything that might have occurred at that moment. Later he was ashamed of his credulity, but for the moment he was wholly under the spell of the Bible stories he had heard and the arguments his young companion had given him. Then he did a foolish thing, something which he instantly regretted.

"Yes, and you look like a new man. You believe so fully now, why don't you exercise your faith and cure yourself?"

"Why, I—I—" The boy stopped, bewildered. His face fell, the light died out of his eyes, his body slumped down in his chair and he seemed about to faint.

The doctor hurried to his side and took hold of his shoulder.

"Here, here, my boy! Brace up! Brace up! What's the matter with you?"

"I—I don't—believe," the boy gasped. "I can't, I—can't."

"You mean that you don't believe what you have been telling me all afternoon? You mean to sit up there and tell me that you have just been talking and acting all this time?"

The doctor made a pretense at bluster in the hope that he might be able to turn the boy's thoughts into other channels and counteract the depressing effect of his ill-considered speech. His words had in some degree the result hoped for. Stanly started up in earnest protest against the other's accusation that he had been shamming, thinking he spoke in earnest.

"I do believe it! It is true, every word of it is true! It can't be any other way! I am satisfied that that is what Jesus meant and that if I believe in Him as I should, as I used to think that I did and as I try to do now, I could heal myself and others as He did. I believe what I have been telling you and I shall always believe that—yes, more—I *know* it, it does not admit of doubt."

When the doctor saw that he had been partially successful, he tried to comfort the boy and make him contented with what he had gained. He hoped to be able, in this way, to induce him to abandon it all till his mind could have a chance to rest from the internal conflict which he had just gone through.

"Yes, I'm inclined to agree with you. You must have it right, and I am going to make a further study of it and see if there is any way that I can make practical use of this fact. You're too impatient and take things too seriously. Just you wait till you are as old as I am and then you won't be in such a hurry to get results and you won't try to force matters. I don't know much about it, but even I can see that some of these things have to be slow growths in the mind. You have just been through a period of stress and storm and your mind is still in a state of ferment and not in the condition to exercise the quiet trust that you are looking for. Just you wait; let the matter drop for a few days and then take it up again, and you will find that you have perhaps attained what you are seeking in the interim."

And then the doctor had an inspiration. He did not know much about the value of hope except that he knew that his patients did better when they were in a hopeful state of mind, and he had never consciously used suggestion for the purpose of producing this state of mind, for the sake of any therapeutic effect, but now, in the effort to do something to aid his young friend, he crystallized many unconscious experiences of the past, into conscious knowledge. Hardly thinking what he

was doing and without any calculated end in view, he put his newly acquired knowledge into practice.

"I believe now that you are going to get well, Stanly," he said. "You can again take up your medical studies and by the time you have fully recovered your health you can be ready to pass examinations and probably begin practicing. Take your books home with you this evening and start where you left off. You'd better review a bit, too, for you have very likely lost the hang of the earlier lessons by this time."

The doctor talked as if there were no chance but that Stanly would believe his prophecy and would wish to again take up the study of medicine, and as he talked he believed what he was saying—so great is the power of acting over the actor—and fell into his old manner of speaking, which brought back to the boy those other days before he had found that he was sick, the days when he was happy in the thought that he was to be a physician. For a time his religious difficulties were put wholly into the background, and he was as anxious as ever to be a doctor and consequently happy in the prospect of having his wish fulfilled.

The effect on his appearance was all that the doctor had hoped for. The droop was all gone, and in its place were hope and a budding joy. The sparkle was

back in the sick lad's eyes now, and this time there was nothing of the insane glitter in them which had before so greatly contributed to the doctor's disquiet.

"Do you really think that I shall get well?" Stanly asked the question, hardly daring to hope that it might be true. "Do you think that I shall ever be strong enough and that I can live long enough to be a doctor?"

"Yes, I believe you can," the doctor replied. "I believe that you will get well, now that you have decided your religious difficulties, and I would like to see you take up your studies as much for a safeguard to your health as in order that you may make a professional success.

"Of course, I may be mistaken," he continued, after a while. "I cannot be certain about this, any more than I was certain about my first unfavorable diagnosis. I may be mistaken, but I think that the chances are very largely in your favor. I believe that you can do it. To make sure, let me give you a further examination."

He went through the form of an examination, and what he found would have been very discouraging news for his patient if he had told him, but he then pretended that his opinion was confirmed. Now that

he was using this medicine of hope and had committed himself to this plan he did not forsake it, but continued as he had begun, to build up the boy's hope and interest in other lines on the chance that he could keep his mind off the subject of his religious difficulties.

"Yes, you will make it now, I believe, but you must take care of yourself and keep cheerful and not think any more about religion and all of that. Put your Bible away and don't touch it again till I give you leave, and stop worrying about these things. Keep your mind on your medical books and on the work at home, and practice the breathing exercises you have been taking and I think that you'll pull through. Don't do any heavy work, but keep as busy as possible with light, easy tasks and your books, and, above all else, don't think of this matter of healing the sick and what will become of you when you die. If you follow my directions you will probably not have to die till you are tired of life. It rests with you, now."

The doctor wiped the sweat from his brow, and as Stanly arose to start home he gave him the same big book that the lad had carried to town on the day that he learned what it meant to feel death close to him. The old man had found this task of lying to the boy, in the faint hope that he might be able to get well,

a hard one, and now he was wishing that his visitor would depart before his mask gave way and revealed the truth.

Stanly left the doctor's office with a comparatively light heart. He had for the time forgotten the matter of his religious doubts and fears and hopes; and he was now looking forward again to a future of achievement and realization of some of the dreams that had one time been so dear and which were again coming to life in his heart. The sun was near the western horizon and it was time for him to be starting homeward if he would arrive before the heavy dew began to fall, so he did not stop to talk with any of his friends on the street. He quickly made his way to his horse and, being luckily equipped with saddle-bags, which his mother had asked him to take in order that he might bring home some little things for her, things which he forgot to get, he was enabled to take care of his book without having to carry it under his arm. He was soon out in the country lanes again and riding homeward.

His whole mind was full of its dreams, and he did not think of what the afternoon had meant to him until after he had crossed the Willow Fork, where he had to stop to let the horse drink. Then he tried to compare the man he then was with the man he had been when he

crossed the stream earlier in the day, and he found that his greatest mental effort would hardly connect them as the same person. He felt like he was living in a whole new world, a world which had nothing in common with anything that he had ever known before. And then as he thought of the prospects that his dreams found for him in the future, he went back in memory to the happier times when he had cherished these same dreams, and thus connected the present life with the earlier one, and the shadowed interim soon faded into an indistinct memory. The doctor's prescription of hope was working even better than he had anticipated. It was giving the lad happiness and was really affording him a fighting chance for his life.

Thus happily did he ride till he had come to the hills a couple of miles from home. With a sudden physical weariness there came a reaction of thought, and he was again confronted with the question of his relation with Jesus and the church which he had so long loved and respected. With this came the thought, "I do not believe."

Again he was plunged into mental turmoil with all the attendant suffering. He went over all the old arguments and arrived at the usual conclusion that he was right in his understanding of Jesus' teaching, and then

came again to a personal application of it and found himself forced to admit that he did not believe.

He was exceedingly unhappy. His dreams were all gone. It did not matter to him that the doctor had said that he might get well. Nothing mattered except that Jesus had come to earth with a message of hope and life, of health in the body and happiness on earth and of life for eternity; a message for all men for all times; that Jesus had come to earth with a message for him and that he could not receive it. Jesus had died for him and was living for him and was holding out all power and happiness and everlasting life to him if he would only accept it, and he—he could not believe! In the face of this fact, nothing else mattered at all; all else was insignificant! There was no place in the whole world for dreams. He did not believe, all else was of no account. That alone was important.

Torn by these thoughts he travelled two weary miles which brought him in sight of home, dimly visible in the dusk on a hill-top across a little valley. He stopped, hitched the horse to the fence and sat down on a grassy bank by the roadside. He had no definite idea in stopping at that place, but he wanted to be quiet so that he could think; he wanted to be alone and he felt that he must have the whole matter over and done with before

he reached home, where he would be asked questions about the news from town, and wondered at for forgetting the mail and the errands that he was to have done for his mother. Even the company of Old Doll disturbed him and he soon arose and walked into the woods where he could be wholly alone. There he sat down where he could see the clustered farmhouses at home and, leaning back against a tree, he tried carefully and calmly to go over the matter of his relation with Jesus and His message.

His mind recoiled from the task. He could not marshal his thoughts into any order. He could think of nothing except, "I do not believe. This is a personal matter between me and Jesus Christ, as it is with every other person who pretends to believe in Him, and I cannot accept Him, I cannot do my part."

This thought haunted him; he could not get rid of it. Finally in desperation he knelt and prayed again. It seemed that when he had gone just so far in his difficulties, when the accumulating troubles had gathered to just a certain point, he always involuntarily attempted to unburden himself in prayer. He now knelt and prayed without any intention of doing so, without any thought of what he was doing. It was with him as natural as is the quick request of a child for something that it has just seen and wanted and it was just as

frankly sincere and offered with just as much faith in its being heard.

As he prayed the calm and peace of mind he had felt in the few moments between the time of discovering that he had made his decision and the doctor's raising his old doubt again, returned to him, and he finally arose and stood looking across the valley toward the now invisible farm buildings. He felt certain of himself now. He was not conscious of any doubt of either his understanding of Jesus' message nor of his faith in them; he was hardly conscious of any definite feeling or thought. He was calm and quiet; his mind was at rest. He was unconscious of doubts, perhaps for the reason that he was not thinking of them. He was not thinking of anything; he was merely resting.

But he did not know that then, and he did not care what the reason was for his feelings; he would not have cared if he had known that he would still doubt when the subject came again to his mind. He had emptied his surcharged mind of all its disquieting contents and the result was peace. His prayer had been a safety-valve to release the overplus of emotion and he no longer felt anything, hence he was at ease.

He stood for a few minutes looking toward his home hid in the dusk, and then found his horse and finished his interrupted journey.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DAWN OF FAITH.

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.—(Mark 9:24.)

STANLY studied his medical books and followed the doctor's instructions in regard to the Bible and his religious problems for a couple of days and then went to town again to have a lesson and talk with his friend.

While they talked of medical subjects the doctor studied his pupil and he saw in his appearance many signs that the prophecy he had made for the sake of the effect that hope would have in changing the current of the boy's thoughts and saving a mind that was perilously near the wrecking point, might indeed be coming true. This was a very different sort of lad from the one who had come to him a few days before with feverish eyes and drawn face. This was a young man who was interested in life, who had a sane outlook on the present and a hopeful view of the future. He was greatly pleased in the changed appearance of his patient and he took the first opportunity of determining whether the change went any further than in sur-

face indications. He found some slight improvement, but not enough to let him honestly say that there was any chance for the boy to get well. He did not tell him that, however. Following the course in which he had started, he told him that he was getting better and gave him some more instructions about his habits of body and mind, and sent him home with a longer lesson and instructions to report again soon.

This is typical of his life for several weeks. Then there came a change. He began to think more and more of religious matters. His old doubts arose afresh and with renewed power to affect him. He no longer doubted his interpretation of the scriptures; he never thought of Jesus' words to the disciples as meaning anything else than that belief in Him would be proven by the signs that He mentioned. He never thought of it as other than a purely private matter between himself and Jesus and consequently never attended church, where he felt that his presence would be taken as an avowal of belief to his fellow-church members; and he never even talked the matter over with his mother after telling her his final decision and his reasons for it. He was no longer troubled by doubts of this kind. That matter was finished, the discussion closed and beyond any possible re-opening.

One of his neighbors had endeavored to open the discussion with him one day, but Stanly had met his arguments and accusations with a plain statement of belief and the announcement that he felt that this was a matter between himself and his God and that he was not called upon to discuss it with, or defend it from, any other man on earth. Neither did he care to try to win any converts to his opinions. This is what he had found in the Bible and if the neighbor did not find the same thing there, that was his affair and he was not accountable to him.

This speech, delivered with a boy's assurance of power, which Stanly, at a very early age, had developed to a surprising degree, amused the neighbor, but put an effectual check upon any desire he may have felt to ever again broach the subject.

Therefore, when the seeker revived the old question, this part of it no longer vexed him, but instead gave him a firm foundation upon which to rest his other doubt, his doubt of himself. This was one less cause for worry, but its being decided and accepted made the others all the more powerful. He now had no alternative that he could see; he either did or he did not believe, and there could be no question about the matter so long as he remained sick. And he was still sick;

he had never had confidence enough in himself to ask for his health.

When these questions came up again to vex him, he speedily forgot all about the medical books; his desire to become a doctor and his rosy dreams of the future faded from view and he was plunged into a hopeless despair that lasted for a full week before he again came to the point of prayer.

As before, his prayer this time was for faith. He had not yet come to the point of praying for health. He had not yet come to trust his belief. With his prayer, as before, came a temporary relief, a passing calm, but this time there was no live interest to take the place of his religious difficulties and his health was so broken from the strain of the last spell of worrying that this was further cause for uneasiness and further cause to prevent him from getting his mind focused elsewhere. He soon returned to the problem.

There is rarely any standing still in the course of life. Its current has but few pools in it where the water does not move in some direction. Man is either going forward or backward; he is rarely resting, and if he does come to a stop it is only for a time. He is soon starting either onward or backward again.

It was so with Stanly's religious life. He was

making constant progress. While continually reverting to the old doubts and fears, he always came back to them from a little different position. Each time, he brought a different desire, a different knowledge and a different power to bear upon his problems, and now when he came back to the old test again, he came ready to attack it from a new and very advanced standpoint.

It was still a matter of testing his belief in Jesus, but now he was ready to test it from another point of departure. He was now ready to try his faith. Before, he had not had enough confidence in himself to try it in actual personal application, but his last crisis had enabled him to weed out some of the doubts which had stood in the way of realizing that stage of development, and he now had sufficient self-assurance to ask for health.

One morning he awoke with the doctor's question ringing in his ears.

"Now that you believe, why don't you heal yourself?"

This question filled his mind, accusing and shaming him. "Why don't you heal yourself? Why don't you heal yourself?" It seemed to him that the birds were singing the words. He could think of nothing else.

"Why don't I heal myself?" he thought. "I do believe, and I want my health, and Jesus has said that those who believe in Him and pray without doubt of their receiving it, can have whatever they pray for. Why don't I heal myself?"

Stanly was not in a condition when calm, careful consideration of anything was possible to him. His mind had been so long troubled with problems in which reason and logic had but little part, and the habit of worrying about these matters had become so thoroughly established, that he now found it next to impossible to attack this question with any method of analysis that would be calculated to give an answer to it. He could only repeat the question to himself in various forms and wait for his mental powers to unconsciously find the answer for him.

He tried to think of some reason for his failure to heal himself; he tried to see why he was sick and at the same time able to believe that the prayer of faith could heal him, and that he was able to pray that prayer. He was unable to find any answer to the question until it suddenly occurred to him that he had not tried it. He had made no effort to heal himself. He had not exercised the power that Jesus had said would

be his when he believed. He was possessed of the power but had not tried to use it. No wonder he had not healed himself.

“I am like the man who, with a great, strong body, might starve in the midst of plenty because he lacked the sense to reach out for food. Here, I, through my faith, partake of the divine nature, have at my disposal divine power and have Jesus’ promise that my prayers shall bring to me whatever I want, and do I pray for health, the thing that I want above all else? No, I sit and mourn my lack of it; I take breathing exercises, and pills, and shield myself and eat everything except the things that I want to eat, and puzzle over the problem of what Jesus meant by what He said; wonder whether He meant what He said or meant something else and then, when I have settled all my doubts and I really believe, I still sit and mourn and pity myself and wonder why I’m sick. I guess I’m like a lot of other believers in Jesus. I believe in Him but I don’t want to take any chances of being mistaken; I never give Him a chance to answer the prayer of faith. When I pray it is for something that I can either say I have or have not received, and which I can prove to myself that I have received in answer to my prayer, in spite of the fact that it seems more likely

that the case is just the opposite. We are all afraid to test our faith; we know too often that there is not enough of it to admit of test; it is merely a matter of words and we are afraid to run the chance of making it anything else.

"I'll test my faith now; I'll not wait any longer," and without more ado he bounded out of bed and kneeling by its side he prayed.

"O Lord, I believe. Make me well again. Give me back my health. Jesus, heal me."

It was a prayer from the heart, but it was more formal and had less of emotion behind it than his prayers for faith had had. This was no bursting of a safety valve; this was a formal, well-considered prayer, a prayer resembling in large degree the public prayers he had heard in church, and he recognized this difference even while he was praying. In this was the seed of the doubt which caused him to get back into his bed and lie there watching for the metamorphosis that would mean his restoration to health.

He lay quiet for fifteen minutes, waiting for the change, and the change did not come. He waited fifteen minutes more, and still he did not feel any change. Another period passed, and then he arose and began to make tests to see if he was still sick or had been cured

without noticing the difference. He started his self-exploration with a dull fear at his heart and continued it with growing distress. When he found that he was the same, that there was no difference whatever in his condition so far as he could determine, he was gripped by panic fear; his old doubts of himself momentarily returned, and he was desperate.

All morning long he went about in a daze, stunned with the thought that a prayer of faith had failed. He did not doubt his faith; he was past that stage; he did not doubt his understanding of Jesus' teachings; he had passed that point first of all; and he did not doubt that Jesus was reliable; he had never questioned that, but he had prayed believing and he had not received an answer to his prayer, and he could not understand it.

After dinner he went to the tree by the spring and there he sat down to think it over again. He went over the whole thing from first to last several times without coming to any least understanding of what was wrong, till finally a new thought came to him.

"Did I really pray believing?"

This was the first time that he had consciously questioned it.

"I do not think I doubted; I know that I expected

to be healed; is it possible that I doubted without knowing it?"

He then analysed as carefully as was possible for him, in his disordered state of mind, his actions and thoughts at that time, and he finally came to understand that he had doubted; that he had proven his doubt when he got back into bed to see what would happen. In looking for a difference which would show that his prayer was answered he had proven his doubt. If he had not doubted he would never have thought to notice to see whether he was healed. He would have taken it for granted. It was only that he recognised a possibility of his not being healed that he had been able to look for it. He saw that he would not look for something that there was no question of finding; that looking had been asking the question, "Is it done?"

Then again he prayed and again he failed to get the answer and for the same reason. Or at any rate he thought that it was for the same reason. He thought that he had not yet been able to pray believing, and yet he could not see any room for doubt except as he found it in his looking for the signs of cure afterwards. He then decided that the prayer of faith would not be a formal prayer, a prayer "on occasion," as he put it, but would be an involuntary out-pouring of the soul,

perhaps an unconscious act. He decided to stop praying for a set purpose where he would make the prayer much the same as a dose of pills which he would administer to a certain end. He saw that this was making the prayer itself an object and that where it became so all-important the faith was likely to be left out.

"As the prayer becomes formal it becomes the object of the effort and correspondingly lacking in faith," he thought. "I see now how there is so little praying that gets tangible answers and how it became necessary for a formalized religion to cover up and drop out of sight the truth of Jesus' best promises to men while they live on earth. I shall never consciously or voluntarily pray again. I shall live and desire what I feel that I need, and when I desire believing that I have it, I shall have prayed the prayer of faith. And when I have prayed this prayer I shall not look to see if I have had it answered, I shall never think of pulling aside my curtain to see if the rosebush has been removed, or the mountain cast into the sea, but I shall know that I have what I desire without looking and shall never think to question it.

"I have not yet prayed the prayer of faith, but I shall; I know that I shall. I shall pray a prayer of perfect trust, in which there is no room left for curiosity, and I shall have it answered."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.—(Luke 6:12.)

STANLY was exalted, happy, exultant. He felt that nothing was impossible to him. He felt that he would have his health, that he would be well and strong again.

But he was not yet through with this period of stress, he was only well entered upon it. He went about in this same happy mood for the rest of that day, and he was still confident and happy next morning when he arose, but he began to get discouraged when that day passed without showing any change in his condition, and he was again falling into despair when a fruitless week had passed. He tried to reason with himself; he tried to think that he would come to the point where he could trust perfectly and be healed, and then would come the thought that he did not see how it were possible to trust more perfectly than he then did.

One day his mother had a caller and while they talked he tried to take a nap in the next room. This

was one of the days when he seemed to be losing every power to struggle against the current that tried to pull him down, when he seemed even to lose the desire to struggle, and he was resting now in almost hopeless despondency. He had been suffering more of late; he had grown weaker and his hemorrhages so frequent and copious that he lived in constant fear that his mother would discover his condition. He knew that he should not think of these things, for while he was no longer going to see the doctor, he still remembered occasionally what he had told him and tried sometimes to follow his directions. In compliance with his friend's cautions, he now tried to think of other things, but he seemed to have lost all power to govern himself and his thoughts quickly drifted back into their gloomy channel and stayed there.

His mind fully occupied, he did not hear what his mother and her caller were talking about till something that the visitor said in a louder tone caught his attention.

"It may not be God's will that she should get well," the visitor said. "He may be trying her for her own good. You know who the Lord loves He chastens," she incorrectly quoted; and the rest was lost in the thoughts that quickly surged into his consciousness.

"Perhaps it is God's will that I should be sick," he thought. "Perhaps He has visited my sickness upon me for some purpose and He may not want me to recover. Perhaps that is the reason why I have not been healed before this. I surely have prayed with faith in my heart. Yes, that must be it. It is God's will that I suffer."

He was in one of those morbid states of mind when the sufferer welcomes the thought that he is sick, as sick as possible; when he would even consciously lie in order to make himself out the sickest of the crowd if talking with his fellows, and when he loves to pose before himself in the mirror, assuming the most dolorous countenance possible in demonstration of his very deplorable condition. He welcomed now the thought that he was being made to suffer by the will of God, and his mind ran easily on conjuring up further sufferings that he would likely undergo, limited in its gruesome occupation only by the limits of his imaginative powers. He decided that he was to be afflicted with every pain and trouble possible to his disease, with perhaps the larger part of the complaints of which he had read in his medical books added.

Presently he grew weary and fell asleep. When he awoke he went back to the idea that he might be

sick by the will of God and that it might not be God's wish that he should get well.

"If that is so, I suppose that I should accept my afflictions and not try to get well," he thought. "But I don't believe that is honestly possible. I don't believe that anyone of those who roll up their eyes and try to look as they think martyrs should look and say that it is God's will that they should suffer, and then add 'God's will be done'—I don't believe that they or anyone else really resign themselves to their fate and do not want to be well. I have never seen anyone myself who did not send for a doctor as soon as he got sick and who ever gave up trying to get well, and I never expect to unless I run across someone who has found life so unpleasant and painful that he welcomes the idea of the change. I think that God made man perfect and that he is himself responsible for all the troubles and the pains that have come to him. Seems to me that Solomon or some one said that The Lord has made men perfect, but He has sought out many inventions, and I agree with him. No, sir, if God intended to make man suffer He would not have made him always want to get well."

Then he went over in his mind, one of the conversations which he had had with the doctor, when his

friend had told him that there is a principle in all of nature which tends towards healing; that the injured plant makes an effort to heal its wounds and that the animal always tries to get well; that this principle is recognized as a part of the nature of the man, animal, and plant and that it is always present. From this he went on to the further thought which he had gained from the same source, that pain is evidence of an effort on nature's part to restore the injured part to the normal condition; that it is really a friendly warning to the conscious man to stop whatever is interfering with the normal conduct of Her business of life, and he could not see how he could reconcile this characteristic that God had given to all living things and maintained in their bodies, with the idea that He also inflicts the injuries that cause the pains.

“Pain is for the purpose of protecting the sufferer, and it is given things to feel pain for the sake of the good it will do them; how then would He contradict the purpose and intention expressed there by inflicting injury on the beings He has created and equipped for protecting themselves against exactly these things? No, that is not so. That is another of the sophistries that men have made to keep from having to meet some of the questions that are put to them. No, I'll never

believe that God inflicts pain on any person or thing. I do not remember of a single instance where Jesus told anyone who appealed to Him for help, while He was on earth, that He would not cure them, that it was the will of God that they be sick. No, that's false, and I'll not believe it.

"God is trying to heal us all the time, but we have not the faith that will enable Him to do it. That seems a strange thing to say about omnipotent God, but I guess He has made some law that renders faith necessary, for Jesus could not do healing without belief in Him and He is the same as God.

"Well, I don't know how it is, the more I think of it the more I get muddled and I have no way of knowing when I'm right, for on one hand stand all the teachings of the preachers and Bible students, and on the other hand is the Bible itself, which makes these teachings seem to me to be largely false, and between them I lie sick and sore and unable to decide what is right and what is wrong. Of one thing only I am satisfied, and that is that Jesus told us the truth and the prayer of faith will heal the sick today as well as in the days of His ministry among men, if there are any who can pray that kind of a prayer. And I feel certain that not only will this sort of a prayer re-

sult in healing, but it will bring to us anything else that we ask for, move mountains of any and all kinds, literal and figurative, if we can but pray believing."

So his thoughts ran on, summing up the results of his trials and his efforts to clear up the tangled skein of crossed life currents and misunderstandings. He had finally come to the point where he could begin to believe in that extreme degree which merits the name of trust. He was ready to pray a real prayer of faith; he, in fact, was giving expression to such a prayer in this summing up and self-appraisement, although he did not know it and was not in the least conscious that he was actually praying. He was praying the first of many prayers of faith that he was to pray in years to come as the result of his long struggle with doubt.

"I know that Jesus is to be trusted." He was speaking aloud in his earnestness. "I know that He did not lie to us, that if He were here in His own flesh today He would be able to heal us and that He would do it; He would not refuse us and tell us that it is the will of God that His children suffer, their faces and forms lose all of their humanity in the terrible conflict with pain and disease. Why, that one thing alone, the disfigurement that comes from the ravages of disease and the tortures of pain, affecting both body and mind,

should be enough to prove that God does not afflict His children, for we are made in His image, and surely it would not be His will that we should so distort and falsify His image.

“No, I’ll not believe any such blasphemy about the loving God, no matter who is responsible for it; no matter who originated the idea that He could afflict men, I’ll never believe it. For all of Jesus’ life and works prove to me that there is only love in His heart for men and that when we obey the laws which He has ordained in the universe and so give Him a chance to express that love for us, He will bless us with health, and cleanness of heart, and purity of soul, and strength of spirit. When we fall short of these ideal states the fault is our own, we are disobedient and rebellious and are not giving Him a chance to express in us the Perfection which His own Perfect Nature knows and which His love inspires Him to give to us.”

Stanly had grown in mind and power of thought to the stature of full manhood during the months of his trouble. Naturally of a logical mind and inspired by his mother from early childhood to the free use of his own powers and dependence upon his own conclusions, already a veteran on the platform of the neighborhood debating societies; the peculiar circumstances

9

of his position had brought out and developed his mind in a few months as only years of ordinary life could have done. He had suffered from the sudden forcing of his mental growth; he had been carried to one extreme in his periods of intense activity and then plunged back into the depths of the other when exhausted and in need of rest, but finally, he had emerged from the conflict with a sturdy strength and activity of mind which he was to realize in later years was well worth the price he had paid for it.

He sat silent for awhile, watching the coming of the sunset colors in the western sky. The evening peace of the world about him found place in his own being; a long day of intense activity was coming to a close for him and he, too, was coming to a pleasant evening of quiet and peace of soul. His work was done, the conflict was finished and the battle won for the better part and he was ready for rest. The setting sun and the gathering evening in the world without were in perfect harmony with the subsiding heat of past turmoil and the growing peace of trust in the God of his Cosmos in his own mind.

Then came to him the first full realization of his decision and what it meant to him. For the first time he fully realized that he had decided, that there was no

longer any doubt in his mind, that he really believed. He felt no more fear of the future. He could face its problems with serene eyes, and with the burden of dread lifted from the shoulders of the present it held only good for him.

He rose to go to the evening meal and, standing for a moment looking into the fading western light, he completed the summary which he had begun, and from the fullness of a heart which had found peace in a perfect faith, he prayed his prayer for health, believing that he had it.

“Jesus spoke truth. He said that the prayer of faith would heal the sick and He proved it while on earth. His disciples proved it after Him. No, not after Him, for He still lives. But after He had left His human body those who believed in Him proved for all time to come that the powers He used are eternal powers even as He is eternal and His words are spoken for all time. Yes, faith is still the golden key to the treasury of the kingdom of heaven—not faith in the views of some theologian, not blind belief in some certain interpretation of the Bible or the infallibility of some man-made or self-appointed so-called representative of God—but faith in the power of God

to realize man's desires, trust in the powers which God has given to man for this purpose.

"I shall yet pray the prayer of perfect faith, and when I do I shall have my health and whatever else I may desire. He has said that it would be so and I believe that it will. I shall yet claim these promises mine, for I shall yet believe with that trust, which takes no account of what other men may think of me, counting it enough that I am right with my God, that leaves no room for doubt and wavering, that doubts not the fulfilling of my desire."

He turned from the pale west, where Venus showed dimly in the whitened sky, and walked toward the lighted windows, with a new interest in the things around him and the people that there awaited him. He felt like he was coming home from a long absence. He had not been living with his family in all the months that had passed since he first learned he was doomed to death. Although he had never been away from home except for short visits to the old doctor, since the Sunday when he preached his first and last sermon, he had yet never really been at home at all in his feelings. His secret troubles separated him from the others. He lived in a world apart, a world far distant from the old world in which he had formerly lived and which was shared by the other members of the home circle. Not

even his mother had really been a part of this new world which had claimed him. And now he was returning to the old world again; returning a different person, to be sure, returning a man grown, with new powers and new outlooks on life, but returning none the less.

As he went up the path of light which the lamp made shining through the kitchen door, he murmured to himself, with a heart full of gratitude for the message it brought to him:

Lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world.
(Matt. 28:20).

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THIS WAS THE last of Stanly's religious troubles; the last of his stormy battles with Doubt. After this final evening he gathered up again the threads of the old life, took up his tasks about the farm and in the home and, for a time, tried to take up again the study of medicine. But he found that this tended to bring his thoughts back to himself and the state of his health, so he dropped it.

In the days that followed he put all thought of his health out of his mind. He realized that he must trust fully if he would pray the prayer of faith. He intuitively understood that a prayer of this kind is a continuous performance and a matter of mental attitude and feeling toward the desire with which it concerns itself, not a matter of repeating over a few words in measured phrases. It is something inexpressible, something indescribable, something that can only be lived and, like Life, permits not of analysis and description.

He prayed his prayer of faith in the trustful peace of mind and heart with which he took up his interrupted life; in the untroubled face that he turned toward the future; in the happy response he made to the demands of the family upon his time and his companionship. And he received the answer to his prayer in renewed strength and growing health.

He really never knew when he recovered his health. He had never suffered himself to question his possession of it since the evening when he had made his final decision and, in fact, so fully did he put behind him the nightmare of struggle and trial that he hardly ever remembered that he had been sick. It was only when he went one day, some months afterwards, to visit his friend the doctor, that he had the question brought squarely before his attention.

He had often been in to see his friend, but by a tacit understanding neither had spoken about Stanly's health nor his religious difficulties. The doctor had recognized some great change for the better in the lad and he was so happy to see it that he would not risk a second time dashing his happiness as he had one time done when Stanly first made his decision of the question of healing through faith. So he had let matters stand and watched with growing wonder the constant

improvement in the young man's physical appearance.

On the day in question he could no longer restrain his curiosity as to the cause of the change he observed and his desire to express his pleasure in it.

"Stanly," he said, "I've been wanting for some time to ask you to let me examine you again. You look the picture of health, and I never hear you cough any more, and yet, according to all that I know of the science of medicine, you should be in your grave or so near there by this time that there would not be much difference. I want to examine you and see if these appearances are real or only fictitious."

Stanly plainly expressed his surprise in his face and manner. He was surprised for the moment. He had really almost forgotten that he had been sick, so thoroughly had he put all thought of his trouble behind him.

"Why, yes," he said, after a moment, hesitating in his choice of words, "examine all you want to. I think I know what you'll find. I'm surely well if I ever was. I had forgotten that I was ever otherwise. Go ahead with your examination."

While the doctor was giving him a thorough examination according to the methods then in use among his school of physicians, Stanly turned back in memory to the time when he had undergone a similar examina-

tion in a very different frame of mind. He went back to the second examination which the doctor had given him, when both felt certain that but one result could be announced, and he tried to think of himself as the same person in both of these experiences. He could not closely connect himself with that other lad who had suffered that painful experience. It was very far away in life, although separated by but a few short months in time from the present.

"Well, well! I couldn't have believed it possible!" the doctor exclaimed, when he had finished. "You're as sound as a new dollar, my boy. There is not a trace that I can find. I've never seen you in better health. How on earth did you do it?"

Stanly was again surprised. He did not stop to think that the doctor did not know that he had fully settled all of his troubles of mind and heart; that the doctor did not know that the prayer of faith had such power over the ills of man. He had not thought to tell the other about it; it had seemed to him such a matter-of-fact truth, such an unquestionable verity that all other people should see it as he saw it to be.

"Why, didn't you know?" he asked. "I've learned to believe. I thought you knew. I thought that everybody knew, if I thought about it at all. I came

to a full comprehension of Jesus' message of faith and then I trusted Him, or God, or Nature, whatever it is that does the actual healing, to give me the health I desired so much. Somehow, when I reached that point I quit worrying about it and sort of took for granted that the result would follow. I think I must have prayed a prayer of faith, although I do not know when I did it, unless I have been doing it all the time when I have been trusting my desires for fulfillment."

The doctor did not reply. He sat back in his chair watching the boy and thinking, thinking thoughts that would not permit of expression even if he had been in the mood for talking just then. He felt the force of the young man's simple trust in these powers which he did not profess to understand, but which he had learned of and trusted through the message that Jesus had brought to men two thousand years ago, but which had lain hidden from their eyes for so long. He felt shamed by his own doubt and by the questions that arose in his mind as he heard the other tell what had been the source of his wonderful recovery. He felt that here was a mere boy who had done something, who possessed a knowledge, who had reached farther than all of his scientific studies had been able to carry him. He felt that the younger man had penetrated deeper

into the heart of life as it is than he had with all of his years of experience, and for the moment he was abashed with the sense of being in the presence of a superior.

When the doctor did not reply, Stanly continued.

"I had not really thought of there being any difference in my condition now and at any other time. I can't even now, seem to think of myself as the same person as the one who used to be sick. That all seems very unreal and far away now, just as my religious doubts and worries seem things of another age, another life. I never think of health and disease these days, because I am living health, I suppose; and I never think of religion either, perhaps because I live that, too. I know that I used only to be playing at it.

"So you are sure that I am perfectly sound and well, are you?" he questioned the doctor, with an amused smile.

"Yes," the other finally replied. "You are well so far as I can see and I must say that it is beyond me."

He got up and went to the window, where he looked unseeingly down into the dirty village street for a long time before he turned back to find Stanly immersed in a book which he had found on a table by his side.

"I must have made a mistake in my diagnosis," the doctor muttered, as he looked at Stanly. "Yes, that

is it. I made a mistake in my diagnosis. But then, there were all the others, they couldn't have—Oh, pshaw! Of course that is it. Such things don't happen nowadays. Just a simple matter of mistaken diagnosis and worry and then change of mental occupation and recovered balance of function under a more happy frame of mind. It's just as well to let him go on and think that he is right, but then—and maybe he is right, maybe—Pshaw! What is the matter with me?"

He impatiently brought his silent monologue to a close when it had reached this disturbing stage, and spoke aloud to his companion.

"Well, my boy," he said, "I am surely glad to see you all right again. Do you find that book interesting? That's a new one I just got in the other day. I've already been through it once, so you can take it along with you if you care to read it. Why don't you study pedagogy and teach school? I have some more books here on the same subject; you know I always did have a hankering to teach school myself; and I'll let you have them as long as you need them. That will be better for you than doctoring, especially with these new ideas that you have in your head. Maybe I'll call on you some day, though, to help me with some of my cases and then you can try your new system on them."

The doctor spoke in a tone of friendly banter with the idea that he was trying to tease his young friend, but what he was really doing was something very different from that. He was talking against the thoughts which insisted on presenting themselves to his attention. He was trying to still some insistent questions in his own mind. He was dodging some accusations of his own powers which Stanly's health and his explanation of its source seemed to make. He was getting rid of the question as many another of his brother physicians have had to do in times past and present, and the method that he used was the one most commonly employed for this purpose.

Stanly took home the book on pedagogy and soon became deeply interested in it. He prepared himself for school teaching and soon found a place where his services were in demand. For several years he taught school in the little country school houses before he found a place for his ideas in one of the larger seats of learning. There he came into touch with—

But that is another story. This tale is finished. It is only necessary to say that twenty years after the doctor laughingly and half sneeringly threatened to call on Stanly to heal the sick through the prayer of faith, this seed-thought blossomed into a great purpose and

bore a wonderful fruit in actual healing by this means.

The boy who had wished to become a doctor and then a preacher became, after many years, healer of the sick and minister to the downtrodden selfhood of men. He realized a hundredfold his dearest dreams and lived to bless the time when he was tried in the crucible of Fate and cleansed of the dross of doubt of God and self which had been instilled into his mind by misguided teachers in his early life.

And in these days of Realization, he came to appreciate the full truth and dependableness of Jesus' message to men. He came to fully know that he was not mistaken when, as a young man, he had decided that Jesus had spoken for all time, had voiced truths that were truths before He expressed them and would continue to be truths as long as time is, even though the name of Jesus should be blotted from the memory of man; for the Christ has always lived and will always live in the hearts of all who, consciously or unconsciously, follow His teachings, and His message is always true no matter what may be man's understanding or misunderstanding of it.

Although he had long before learned to pray the prayer of faith, had learned to live his religion, it was only in these later days of more mature study that he

learned to appreciate the full significance of man's relation with God, to know why faith is necessary and never-failing, to fully appreciate what Jesus meant when He said, *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

THE END.

L'ENVOI.

To those who may be disappointed because Stanly did not realize the answer to his prayer with a fanfare of trumpets and a startling climax of feeling and emotion, I will say that all the great things of life are given birth in the darkness and the stillness; deep in the Silent Places, far from the rush and the hurry and the sensationalism of conscious life, into which they come only as the fruits of the true living Tree. The storm and stress periods are the time of the plowing and planting of the ground. The harvests grow and ripen only when the soil is undisturbed with but an occasional cultivation.

To those illuminated ones who are able to read and apply the lesson which is taught by this simple tale, I would further say: After you have planted your gardens with Desire, water them with Hope, cultivate them with Cheerful Thoughts, and warm them with the beneficent sunshine of Faith in the outcome. And remember that each harvest can be planted but once, that the ground is cleared by doubt before a new crop can be planted in the same garden, and that each new planting delays the reaping, that it is the Desire which is left undisturbed and properly cared for that soonest comes to fruit.

INDEX.

- Acts—55, 56, 57, 58, 59.
Aeneas—56.
Agree—53, 80, 84, 145, 148, 158, 181.
All things—74.
Belief—25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 48, 50, 51, 52, 60, 61, 74, 75, 83, 84, 86, 98, 99, 137, 143, 145, 151, 156, 170, 171, 183, 187.
Believe—18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 50, 61, 64, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 90, 99, 103, 116, 136, 138, 142, 143, 147, 151, 152, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 164, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 184, 185, 193.
Believers—54, 74, 77, 82, 87.
Bethany—135.
Bethsaida—127.
Bible—14, 15, 17, 18, 38, 42, 43, 47, 49, 52, 60, 62, 69, 73, 79, 82, 83, 84, 94, 100, 103, 105, 113, 116, 125, 138, 140, 141, 144, 154, 156, 160, 183, 187.
Blind man—62.
Canaan—68.
Centurion—65.
Church—21, 27, 28, 30, 36, 38, 42, 44, 55, 76, 79, 82, 100, 113, 139, 168.
Confidence—3, 18, 26, 62, 119, 170.
Corinthians (I)—151.
Courage—9.
Death—14, 16, 17, 45, 70, 188.
Decided—155, 156, 169.
Decision—39, 40, 43, 85, 90, 99, 153, 154, 168, 191.
Desire—16, 75, 97, 146, 169, 171, 177, 188, 190, 192, 194, 200.
Despair—12.
Diagnosis—6, 7, 139, 160, 196.
Disciples—21, 51, 52, 54, 59, 68, 69, 75, 78, 86, 102, 121, 168, 187.
Disease—12, 74, 102, 106, 110, 122, 139, 184.
Doctor—4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 49, 94, 97, 99, 100, 101, 103, 107, 108, 113, 120, 123, 128, 130, 138, 141, 153, 156, 157, 166, 170, 179, 181, 191, 193, 197, 198.
Dorcas—57.
Doubts—52, 61, 75, 77, 88, 93, 94, 143, 156, 166, 168, 171, 174, 175, 176, 183, 188, 190, 194, 195, 198, 200.
Dreams—3, 4, 10, 18, 46, 162, 163, 164, 198.
Education—15.
Eutychus—58.
Exaltation—4, 17.
Experience—9, 18.
Faith—23, 24, 27, 35, 37, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 74, 75, 79, 87, 88, 89, 107, 119, 145, 155, 156, 166, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 177, 183, 187, 199.
Father—1, 15.
Fears—13, 38, 55, 88, 90, 92, 155, 162, 175, 178.
Future—2, 3, 4, 12, 44, 167, 191.
Gadarenes—115.
Galilee—60, 106, 110.
Hands—18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 29, 34, 58, 100, 103, 104.
Happiness—8, 89.
Heal—103, 112, 113, 123, 137, 157, 171, 172, 183, 184.
Healed—19, 22, 35, 55, 56, 58, 65, 66, 100, 106, 108, 110, 112, 123, 125, 126, 128, 131, 132, 176, 180.
Healer—60, 128, 135, 136, 198.
Healing—102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 110, 113, 118, 120, 122, 123, 125, 132, 138, 182.
Heal the sick—30, 54, 58, 103, 152, 154, 161, 169.
Health—13, 24, 100, 112, 150, 160, 173, 174, 178, 185, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 195.
Hope—8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 56, 60, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 167, 200.
Hypocrites—35, 76, 88, 141.
Interests—3, 5, 14, 49, 67, 150.
Interpretations—15, 33, 36, 144, 146, 168, 187.
Israel—65, 68, 122.
Jairus—70.
James—54, 72.

INDEX---Continued

- Jericho—62.
- Jesus—19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27,
28, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 43,
45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54,
55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64,
66, 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77,
78, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93,
100, 101, 102, 103, 106, 107,
109, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116,
119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125,
126, 127, 130, 132, 133, 134,
135, 138, 142, 144, 151, 153,
154, 157, 163, 164, 165, 171,
172, 173, 174, 175, 183, 184,
185, 187, 194, 198, 199.
- John—49, 72, 103, 133, 134, 135,
143.
- John (I)—51.
- Joy—17.
- Kingdom of God—199.
- Kingdom of Heaven—198.
- Lazarus—135.
- Lessons—3, 4, 5, 11.
- Luke—62, 65, 66, 70, 72, 104, 108,
111, 122, 124, 125, 129, 130,
131, 132, 178.
- Lunatic—51, 69, 106.
- Lystra—57.
- Mark—17, 48, 62, 66, 70, 107, 110,
115, 119, 123, 125, 127, 128,
143, 151.
- Martha—135.
- Mary—135.
- Matthew—51, 52, 60, 62, 64, 65,
68, 69, 70, 86, 101, 105, 106,
108, 111, 112, 113, 118, 123,
125, 126, 127, 128, 152, 190.
- Medical—3, 13, 94, 156, 168.
- Medicine—2, 14, 16, 95, 120, 160,
190, 192.
- Message—14, 22, 25, 35, 46, 54,
164, 189, 198.
- Ministry—18, 46.
- Mood—5, 90, 178, 194.
- Mother—11, 13, 15, 23, 29, 31, 32,
33, 36, 41, 48, 56, 61, 82, 84,
90, 101, 129, 142, 162, 185.
- Paul—57, 58, 194.
- Peter—55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 73, 78,
101.
- Peter (II)—145.
- Pharisees—77.
- Philip—56.
- Philippians—144.
- Physician—11, 67, 113, 192.
- Possible—74, 84, 139, 194.
- Power—18, 19, 24, 66, 118, 121,
126, 145, 146, 151, 152, 168,
171, 172, 173, 179, 185, 189,
193, 194, 197.
- Practices—21.
- Prayed—31, 36, 38, 49, 57, 58, 93,
165, 174, 176, 177, 190.
- Prayer—176, 177, 183, 191.
- Prayer of Faith—74, 86, 172, 173,
176, 177, 183, 184, 187, 190,
191, 193, 194, 198.
- Promises—21, 22, 23, 37, 53, 74,
76, 86, 88, 145, 177, 178, 188.
- Publius—58.
- Purpose—45, 48.
- Realization—162, 186, 198.
- Realize—3, 5, 7, 18, 22, 29, 41, 43,
185, 187, 198, 200.
- Religious—15, 46, 81, 88, 89, 90,
94, 133, 139, 150, 161, 168,
170, 190, 191, 195.
- Ruler's daughter—119.
- Seek—42, 146, 147, 158.
- Sermon—17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 28,
33, 98, 106.
- Sick—18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27,
28, 29, 34, 46, 47, 54, 55, 57,
58, 60, 65, 72, 78, 90, 94, 100,
102, 103, 104, 128, 172, 173,
180, 181, 191, 192, 195.
- Signs—18, 19, 20, 29, 34, 35, 37,
52, 55, 78, 80, 84, 151, 155.
- Siloam—134.
- Simon—102, 104.
- Sophistry—20, 25, 26, 28, 33, 76,
79, 154, 182.
- Struggle—12.
- Suggestion—158.
- Sympathize—3.
- Symptoms—6.
- Syria—106.
- Tabitha—57.
- Teacher—4, 14, 16, 44, 149, 198.
- Teachings—24, 33, 44, 59, 82, 89,
149, 152, 164, 183, 198.
- Test—27, 30, 59, 171, 174.
- Thessalonians (I)—149.
- Timothy (II)—144.
- Trial—26, 27, 99, 191.
- Trouble—11, 48, 83, 94, 117, 188.
- Trust—35, 38, 44, 76, 158, 170,
178, 184, 185, 187.
- Truth—25, 28, 36, 40, 51, 85, 98,
103, 146, 148, 149, 154, 162,
177, 183, 193, 198.
- Unbelief—60, 69, 167.



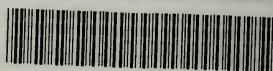
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